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ABSTRACT

In early 1999, ABC Canada and Literacy British Columbia (BC) worked with 55 literacy organizations across Canada to study student recruitment and retention. Telephone interviews were conducted with 338 people who had contacted programs seeking literacy information or services (callers). Findings indicated callers constituted a broad cross-section of people, from all age groups, from large and small communities, with a very wide range of formal education and employment status; callers heard about programs and how to contact them through media advertising and posters, telephone book, community groups, agencies, schools, and word-of-mouth; callers were seeking help with reading and writing, getting a high school diploma or credits, math alone or as a component with reading and writing, employability skills, or English as a second language; more callers were interested in improving literacy skills for personal, social, and general educational reasons than for job or retraining purposes; less than half of callers enrolled in a program; program/policy-related factors were the main reasons driving non-enrollment for the most callers; socioeconomic-circumstantial factors were the main reason reported by more than half of dropouts; and of those who had completed or were still in a program, 88 percent reported high levels of satisfaction with program level, content, and teaching structure. National Follow-Up Survey is appended. (Contains 48 figures, 42 references, and an index.) (YLB)

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Patterns of Participation

in Canadian Literacy and Upgrading Programs

Results of a National Follow-up Study

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Ellen Long, with Sandy Middleton
ABC CANADA in partnership with Literacy BC

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in Canadian Literacy and Upgrading Programs

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ABC CANADA and Literacy BC gratefully acknowledge
the financial support of the National Literacy Secretariat.

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"I liked your survey.

It was good to talk about
some of the good things I'm doing
and some of the problems.

I just hope you
can find solutions to some
of the problems."

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This report results from the intellectual and practical contributions of hundreds of people. First, heartfelt thanks to the 55 literacy and upgrading programs and groups who participated in this study. Without the pivotal work of these groups, this study would not have gotten off the ground. In light of the time and resource pressures faced by Canadian literacy groups and programs, the participation of these 55 groups was generous indeed. These groups deserve to be individually named, which unfortunately cannot be done without risking identifying study participants.

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Preface

The seed for the idea of this national follow-up study was planted in the spring of 1996 at a meeting of provincial representatives from 20 of the 314 literacy groups across Canada who work with ABC CANADA to coordinate the LEARN campaign, a national, multimedia campaign aimed at attracting potential learners to adult literacy and upgrading programs. Part of this meeting was devoted to crafting the research design for a study to measure the impact of the LEARN campaign. In the midst of discussing the study design, one long-term referral-line worker put down her pen, leaned back in her chair and asked, "You know, I understand why it's important to measure the impact of this campaign, but what about finding out what happens once people *make* the call? We're well aware of when and why the phone is ringing off the hook, but what happens once we answer the call and refer someone to a program? *That's* what *we* need to know!"

That particular seed found fertile soil because not only is this question a logical extension of ABC CANADA's public awareness work, the question also follows from the now-mountainous body of evidence pointing to the need for large numbers of Canadian adults to improve their basic reading, writing and math skills. Yet we had no systematic, national overview of the capacity of the literacy field to cope with the current demand for services, to say nothing of the potential demand should ongoing outreach efforts prove increasingly effective.

Some years later, at another meeting attended by many of the same participants, I took pleasure in introducing a proposal for this national study. Coincidentally, one of the people in that room, Sandy Middleton, had spearheaded a follow-up study in her home province of British Columbia, and was available to be integrally involved in this national study, enriching it immensely. The survey designed for the Literacy BC study had a high level of conceptual sophistication, reflecting the insights of seasoned, front-line literacy workers. These insights had been effectively combined with good research methodology—a powerful mix, in a field that has many questions but whose research capacity is currently underdeveloped.

The Literacy BC study, so valuable in its own right, inadvertently became a large pilot study for this national follow-up study, which became the clear beneficiary of the methodological lessons learned. We in turn have learned many other lessons, which we shall gladly pass on to others who may wish to conduct a similar study in their own area.

A word about how to read this report

Statistical information tends to make readers' eyes glaze over. Many people are also mystified about how such information is created. Although researchers have a poor track record for writing in clear language, it is also true that statistical information, by its nature, can be cumbersome when any depth of meaning or detail is to be communicated. In this report, Sandy and I have tried to bridge the communication gap by avoiding technical language and making the illustrations highly readable. We have also included an index so that particular information can be located readily.

Still, given that we did not have the resources to publish what might have been an ideal way to present so much information—one general main report, perhaps, followed by a series of monographs on the various demographic dimensions of participation—we opted to put a great deal of detail into Chapter Four, the findings section of this report. While the other chapters (containing the introduction, literature review and methodological notes) are relatively easy to read, the findings are densely written and meant primarily for reference. This level of detail can provide an empirical foundation for more effective practice and policy decisions.

In the end, the results of research are best assessed by evaluating the methods used to collect the data. In addition to providing a detailed methods section, our questionnaire is included as an appendix so that it can be consulted for contextual information. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to call us.

There is a wonderful saying that illuminates how research is ultimately a very human process:

> We all love democracy—and then there's the political system.
> We all love justice—and then there's the legal system.
> We all love knowledge—and then there's research.

We respectfully and optimistically add our efforts to those of other researchers who have wrestled with the complex issue of participation.

Ellen Long

Ellen Long
Director of Research
ABC CANADA

Highlights

Canada's low levels of adult basic literacy have been well documented by numerous national and international studies. The past decade has seen the development of a national consensus that basic literacy levels in the country's population must be improved, and there has been a corresponding rise in outreach efforts to potential literacy learners. Still, despite increased public awareness of adult literacy issues, the recruitment and retention of adult learners in literacy and upgrading programs remain major challenges, and we have little nationally representative information about the experience of people who attempt to access literacy services.

In early 1999, ABC CANADA and Literacy BC worked with 55 literacy organizations across Canada to learn more about the vital issues of student recruitment and retention. These groups collected the names and phone numbers of adults who had contacted programs seeking literacy information or services, and who gave their permission to be contacted for follow-up. Six to eight months later, the Institute for Social Research at York University conducted telephone interviews with 338 people. Both large in scale and systematic, this study provides a nation-wide snapshot of the complex conditions that promote or deter successful participation in adult literacy and upgrading education.

The findings of this study reveal *critical* problems with access to literacy and upgrading education in Canada. Fewer than half of those who attempted to access services were able to enrol; program/policy-related barriers were the main deterrents for the largest percentage of potential learners, many of whom were not called back after contacting a program or encountered long waiting lists, inconvenient class locations and times, wrong content or teaching structure, and having to pay for the program or tutor (Figure A). When people did manage to enrol in programs, they ran an obstacle-course of socioeconomic and circumstantial barriers that ultimately led more than a third to drop out (Figure B). These troubling results suggest that while literacy may be more on the public agenda than ever before, it is not at a level to *begin* to put a dent in what is a very large social issue in Canada. The current demand for services is not being met, to say nothing of the potential demand. In the absence of long-term, policy-based strategies aimed at building an effective infrastructure for adult basic education, many of the chronic and substantial barriers to improving Canada's literacy rate are likely to persist.

Who are the potential learners?

☐ The potential literacy learners in this study constituted a broad cross-section of people, from all age groups and from communities large and small, with a very wide range of formal education and employment statuses.

☐ Callers more than 45 years of age were dramatically underrepresented, especially given the low literacy levels in that age group. However, older callers had above-average rates of enrolment and were the least likely to drop out of programs, compared with other age groups.

☐ Women were somewhat more likely to call than men, but less likely to enrol. However, once enrolled, women were far less likely to drop out of programs than men.

☐ More than a third of those who called had a high-school diploma or some postsecondary education. Those citing higher levels of formal education were more likely to have been educated in countries other than Canada.

☐ More than 80 percent of callers identified English as their language of greatest fluency.

☐ Nearly half of the potential learners were employed, and nearly a quarter were receiving some form of social assistance. Close to half of potential learners live in households with annual combined incomes of less than $20,000 a year.

How did potential learners hear about literacy programs?

☐ Callers heard about the programs or group they contacted through a wide range of sources, including media advertising and posters; the telephone book; community groups, agencies and schools; and word-of-mouth from family, co-workers, friends and acquaintances.

☐ Almost three-quarters of callers remembered having seen ads about adults going back to school, and more than half of these callers said the ads influenced them to call a literacy group. Although large numbers of people from all demographic groups said the ads influenced them to call, the ads were particularly effective among people with lower levels of formal education and those in larger urban areas.

What motivated people to contact the literacy programs?

☐ Callers were looking for help with reading and writing, getting a high-school diploma or credits, math alone or as a component with reading and writing, employability skills (e.g., vocational training), English as a second language, or something else such as a learning disability.

☐ Callers had a broad diversity of motivations for wanting to upgrade their skills; more callers were interested in improving their literacy skills for personal, social, and general educational reasons (58 percent combined) than for job or retraining purposes (42 percent combined). This points to the need to gear programs to a wide range of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Why did some people not enrol?

☐ Less than half of the respondents who inquired about literacy or upgrading services enrolled in a program. Nonenrolment was particularly pronounced in large urban centres (population 500,000 or more), where almost three-quarters of the respondents did not enrol. Inconvenient program times was a central barrier in large cities.

☐ Program/policy-related factors were the *main* reasons driving nonenrolment for the largest percentage of callers (43 percent). In order of frequency, these factors included not being called back by a program contact person, long waiting lists, inconvenient times, wrong content or teaching structure, finding the program contact to be unhelpful or not knowledgeable, and having to pay for the program or tutor (Figure A). Having to wait a long time to start a program was a factor for close to a third of those who did not enrol. While prevalent in all types of communities, these factors were particularly pronounced in communities with population sizes between 15,000 and 99,999.

Figure A
Main reasons for not enrolling

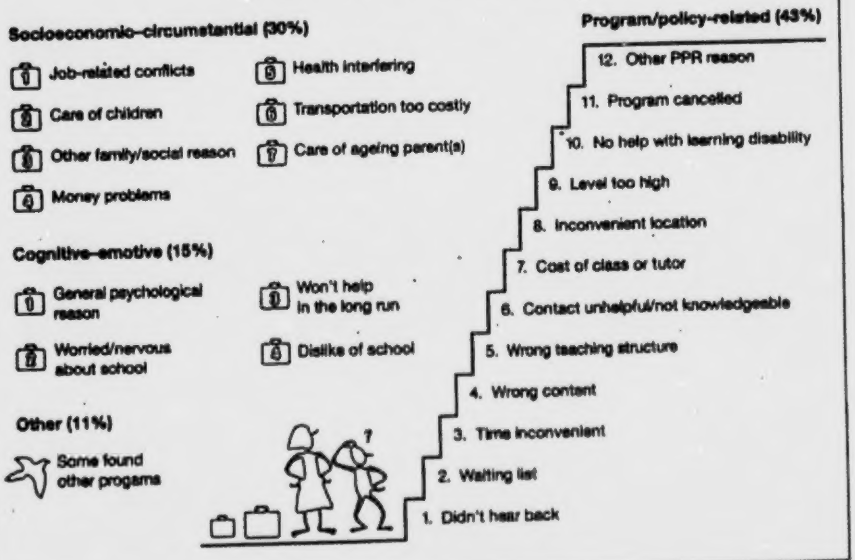
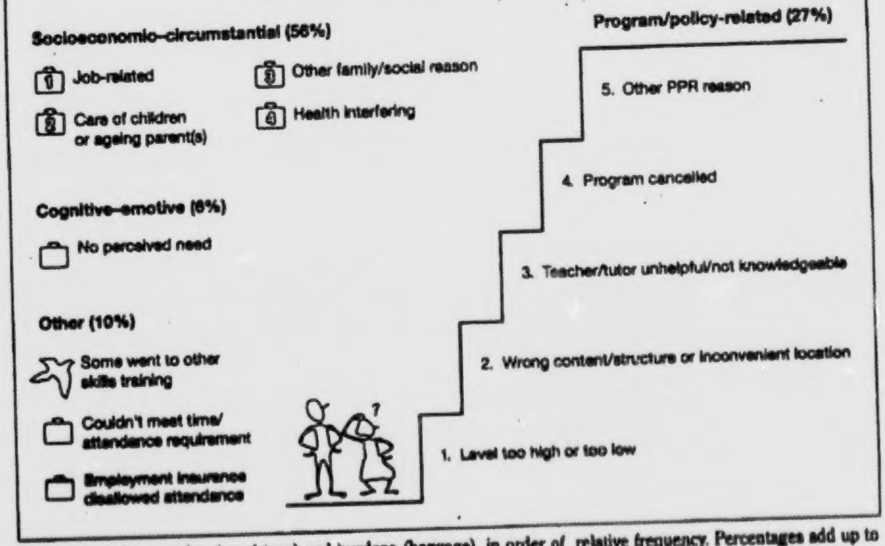

Socioeconomic-circumstantial (30%)
1 Job-related conflicts
2 Care of children
3 Other family/social reason
4 Money problems
5 Health interfering
6 Transportation too costly
7 Care of ageing parent(s)
Cognitive-emotive (15%)
1 General psychological reason
2 Worried/nervous about school
3 Won't help in the long run
4 Dislike of school
Other (11%)
Some found other progams
Program/policy-related (43%)
12. Other PPR reason
11. Program cancelled
10. No help with learning disability
9. Level too high
8. Inconvenient location
7. Cost of class or tutor
6. Contact unhelpful/not knowledgeable
5. Wrong teaching structure
4. Wrong content
3. Time inconvenient
2. Waiting list
1. Didn't hear back
?

Figure B
Main reasons for dropping out


Socioeconomic-circumstantial (56%)
1 Job-related
2 Care of children or ageing parent(s)
3 Other family/social reason
4 Health interfering
Cognitive-emotive (6%)
No perceived need
Other (10%)
Some went to other skills training
Couldn't meet time/ attendance requirement
Employment insurance disallowed attendance
Program/policy-related (27%)
5. Other PPR reason
4. Program cancelled
3. Teacher/tutor unhelpful/not knowledgeable
2. Wrong content/structure or inconvenient location
1. Level too high or too low
?

Reasons are shown as barriers (steps) and burdens (baggage), in order of relative frequency. Percentages add up to 99 because of rounding.

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☐ Socioeconomic–circumstantial barriers were reported by the next largest group (30 percent) of those who did not enrol. Overall, women were much more likely to cite socioeconomic-circumstantial factors than men, reflecting women's lower incomes and higher degree of responsibility for childcare. Money problems was cited as a factor for close to half of all callers who did not enrol.

☐ Of those with children, half of the women and a quarter of the men said they would have called earlier had there been on-site childcare. Upon calling, more than 40 percent of women and close to 20 percent of men cited childcare conflicts as a factor in their decision not to enrol.

☐ Contrary to popular understanding, cognitive–emotive reasons (e.g., fear) were least likely (15 percent) to be cited as the *main* factor for not enrolling. Older callers and those with lower levels of formal education were the most likely to cite cognitive–emotive reasons.

☐ Most respondents cited a complex constellation of reasons for nonenrolment, suggesting the need for multifaceted strategies that address a wide range of factors.

Why did people drop out of programs?

☐ Of those respondents who enrolled, one-third had dropped out by the six-to-eight-month mark. Young people aged 16 to 24, adults with low incomes, men, and those living in rural areas/small towns or very large cities were the most likely to drop out of programs.

☐ Socioeconomic–circumstantial factors were the main reason reported by more than half of those who dropped out of programs (Figure B). Job-related pressures, money problems, and childcare conflicts were the primary factors.

☐ Another quarter cited program/policy-related factors as their most important reason for dropping out. These factors included wrong program level, content or teaching structure; program cancellation; inconvenient location; and other barriers such as attendance requirements.

☐ Few people (6 percent) cited cognitive–emotive factors as their main reason for dropping out.

☐ As with motivation and nonenrolment, most individuals readily cited multiple reasons for dropping out. The most common reasons were job-related conflicts, financial worries and childcare conflicts.

What experiences did people have once they enrolled in a program?

☐ Of those who enrolled, close to 10 percent were still on waiting lists at the time of the follow-up call.

☐ Of those who had completed or were still in a program, the great majority (88 percent) reported high levels of satisfaction with the program level, content and teaching structure. However, a striking area of dissatisfaction was the low number of hours per week spent with a teacher or tutor.

☐ The participation of many learners in literacy and upgrading programs can only be characterized as precarious due to the large number of factors affecting concentration. For those who remained in programs, money worries were cited as the primary factor that made it difficult to concentrate and learn, followed by tiredness/trouble sleeping, care of children, and job-related conflicts.

The implications of this study

□ While literacy may be more on the public agenda than ever before, services are not anywhere near adequate to meet the current demand, to say nothing of the potential demand. Of those who did not enrol or who dropped out, more than three-quarters said they would seek help again in the future. Much needs to be done to facilitate a better outcome for them and for others who will call in response to ongoing public-awareness work.

□ Because goals, motivations, and factors affecting patterns of participation are highly diverse in themselves, so too must be the practice, programming and policy initiatives aimed at increasing the accessibility and effectiveness of literacy and upgrading services in Canada. There are no quick fixes; it is critical to find broad-based, integrated solutions that address multiple barriers. This means thinking well beyond the conventional boundaries of the literacy field itself.

□ Some practice and programming solutions could be acted on immediately, perhaps within the resources currently available. However, fundamentally shifting rates of basic literacy skill in the country will require longer-term, policy-based strategies aimed at building a *system* for adult basic education to replace current piecemeal arrangements. Achieving this will require concentrated advocacy on the part of all stakeholders. □

Chapter One

Why is it important to study patterns of participation?

Canadians as a group are more formally educated and literate than ever before. However, dramatic social and economic changes over the last few decades have required increasingly higher levels of basic literacy skills in the general population. Long a concern of grassroots organizations, basic literacy skills among adults have gained more official attention in recent years, as shown by the appointment of a National Literacy Secretariat in 1987 and Canada's ongoing participation, with other industrialized nations, in extensive measurement of adult literacy rates.

According to Statistics Canada (1996), 22 percent of Canadians have serious difficulties with any type of printed material; a further 26 percent struggle with all but the simplest of reading and writing tasks. Although there is general consensus that solid basic literacy skills are important, there is debate about the particular reasons why adults need these skills. Literacy advocates and practitioners tend to emphasize issues of personal and political empowerment (Hoddinnott 1998), while government and business are apt to focus on factors related to labour-force development and national economic performance (Bloom et al. 1997; Statistics Canada 1996). Learners themselves are most likely to speak about literacy's practical daily applications and the intrinsic satisfaction and personal confidence that come with increased skills (Bossort et al. 1994). There is also serious debate about whether low levels of literacy skill are primarily the cause or the effect of poverty. Whatever the debate or perspective, however, basic levels of literacy skill among adults are generally accepted as fundamental to social and economic well-being.

The Canadian literacy movement has become considerably more sophisticated in its outreach and public awareness work, and people are becoming more aware of adult literacy issues and options. In 1995, following decades of local and provincial outreach efforts, ABC CANADA launched a national, multimedia campaign (called LEARN) to attract adults to literacy programs. The impact of various local, provincial and national campaigns have greatly increased awareness of literacy programs and where to find them (Long 1996) and have contributed to significant increases in awareness of general literacy issues over the last decade (ABC CANADA and Decima Research 1999).

Despite the need for higher basic literacy levels in the general population and increased outreach efforts, recruitment and retention of learners remain major challenges. Only a small fraction (estimates range from 5 to 10 percent) of eligible adults have ever enrolled in a literacy program, and among those who do enrol, attrition rates are high (Quigley 1997). Little is known about the experience of those who attempt to enrol but are unsuccessful. Presently, there is little representative Canadian research to guide our understanding of the complex issue of participation.

The value of systematic follow-up, both to improve practice and to influence public policy, has long been recognized. However, the current structure and resource base of the literacy field means that service provision has taken primacy over service evaluation. When follow-up is done, it is typically with people who have either completed or dropped out of programs. Little is therefore known about the full range of possibilities that can occur once individuals make initial contact with a literacy group. (The various types of literacy and upgrading programs, organizations and groups are referred to simply as *groups* throughout this report.) The number of people who call but do not enrol is unknown, for example; and we can only speculate on the reasons why someone would not sign up. The number of and reasons why those who do enrol often stop attending likewise need to be examined more systematically. Are there simple steps we can take to increase successful completion of a literacy program? Are systematic barriers present that make programs unavailable or inappropriate to large numbers of potential learners?

The need for more Canadian research in the area of participation is compelling. With notable exceptions (Thomas 1990; Sawyer and Rodriguez 1990), few participation studies are Canadian, and most have used small samples that were not randomized, making generalization difficult. Two attempts to track calls to a Canadian literacy referral line have been documented. The first, commissioned by the Literacy Partners of Quebec (Aaron 1997), followed up with callers to an English-language referral line. The second, commissioned by Literacy BC (Middleton 1999), was a longitudinal study tracking calls to the provincial toll-free number. The current national study was much improved because of these foundational efforts; the Literacy BC study was especially influential in the shape and research design of this study.

A central objective of this research was to collect information that can be used as a basis to strengthen the literacy referral and delivery system. Both large in scale and systematic, this study provides an unprecedented opportunity to look, on a national level, at the conditions that promote or deter successful participation in literacy education. To accomplish this, we developed a sophisticated research instrument (see Appendix) to capture a wide range of factors that could intervene between a caller's initial contact with a literacy group and his or her successful attachment to a program of study. Trying to capture this complexity is critical because we cannot truly understand patterns of participation outside of the social, cultural and economic contexts of people's lives, or outside of broad questions about programs themselves.

In a basic sense, our study addresses the degree to which individuals are being linked to services, and the extent to which the services are meeting their needs. In a broader sense, the study provides some early answers to much larger questions about the *capacity* of the Canadian literacy field to meet the current demand for literacy services. By implication, the degree to which *current* demand is being met gives insight into the field's capacity to handle the *potential* demand for services, should ongoing outreach efforts achieve increasing success.

In early 1999, 55 literacy groups across Canada did the groundwork for this follow-up study by asking each eligible caller the same question: "Would you mind if someone called you back in six months to see how it's going?" With permission, we were able to contact many people to address some important questions at a national level, such as:

- What percentage of those who call literacy groups ultimately enrol in programs?
- What are the reasons some people do not enrol?
- How long do people have to wait to start a program or begin meeting with a tutor?
- What do people think about the programs?
- What percentage of people drop out of programs?
- What are the factors associated with not enrolling or with dropping out?
- How can we increase enrolment and retention in literacy and upgrading programs?

Support for this study from broad quarters of the literacy field was immediate and remarkable. After hearing only a few words about the topic, 55 out of 60 groups agreed to undertake an enormous amount of work to make the study happen. And yet, there was a subtext of collective anxiety about this type of study. For example, in areas where funding is under threat or has become tied to a narrow set of outcomes, literacy workers were justifiably sensitive to anything that might suggest that their work involves challenges rather than unqualified successes. If the study were to find that a high percentage of people who call literacy groups did not enrol right away, might this finding be used to cut instead of improve services?

The possible interpretation of various results was also a worry for some. For example, if a potential learner contacts a literacy group after hiding a literacy problem for 20 years but opts not to enrol right away, will that be seen as a success story or one of failure? Anyone who has ever worked with learners knows what a triumph such a call is, and knows further that the same person may call back a year later to enrol and ultimately complete a program. This study contacted individuals six to eight months after their initial contact with a literacy group and therefore looks at patterns of participation only within that time frame.

To help conceptualize the findings of this study and to understand what they could potentially mean for adult literacy and upgrading work in Canada, it is important to note that this study does not reflect the experiences of those with low literacy skills who have never attempted to contact a literacy program. Neither does it address the phenomenon of continuous learning, whereby people with low literacy skills enter into a pattern of ongoing, long-term engagement with formal education. Instead, our study looks at categories of experience that fall somewhere between these extremes of complete nonengagement and continuous engagement. Specifically, our study looks at the experiences of people who:

- Contact a literacy group for basic information but do not seek to enrol in a program
- Attempt to enrol but for some reason do not start
- Enrol in a program but drop out after a time
- Enrol and are now progressing in or have completed a single program

To locate this study within its broader context, we need first to examine some central ideas about participation in adult literacy and upgrading programs, as articulated by practitioners, researchers and theoreticians. □

Chapter Two

What do we already know about patterns of participation?

This section reviews key literature about participation in adult literacy and upgrading programs, covering the broad range of factors that influence enrolment and persistence. The literature in the area of recruitment and retention played a large role in informing the development of the current study and facilitated our interpretation of the findings. Although growing, this body of literature still remains largely descriptive and unconnected to larger theoretical frameworks. The concepts discussed are piecemeal and often contradictory, making it difficult to compare findings or determine patterns.

A defining characteristic of the literature (and of popular understanding) is nicely reflected in a well-known metaphor about a group of philosophers who try to discover, in pitch darkness, the form of an elephant. Each describes the creature's nature in terms of the aspect examined—its trunk (snake-like), tusk (spear-like), ear (fan-like), tail (rope-like), and so on. In the end, each of the obtained perspectives is only partly correct—only one of a list of unassembled parts. In addition to treating partial explanations as though they accounted for the whole picture, much of the existing literature discusses factors affecting participation as independent and unrelated.

What is clear is that the factors influencing participation are complex, numerous, and much debated. Many studies of participation can be classified into two broad types: those focussing on structural explanations (e.g., financial barriers) and those focussing on individual agency-related explanations (e.g., attitudes of fear or resistance). Even studies that try to combine structural and agency-related factors often end by stating the primacy of one over the other, in the absence of empirical evidence. The consequences of focussing on one or the other of these partial factors can be quite problematic. For example, to speak only about structural factors portrays people as passive victims with limited ability to think about or influence the direction of their lives. To focus only on agency-related factors risks either romanticizing people's behaviour or choices, or "blaming the victim" by not appreciating the context in which attitudes are formed and decisions made. The need to integrate these two important perspectives is important, but currently unrealized.

Terms and definitions

Much of the current research on literacy participation borrows heavily from the terms and concepts in the broader literature on general adult education relating to colleges, universities, and continuing and distance education. The factors that are seen to influence participation have traditionally been classified as situational (time, money), dispositional (temperament, attitudes), and institutional (availability, accessibility), terms coined by Cross in 1981. Because these terms emerge primarily out of a literature that relates to colleges and universities, they assume a well developed delivery infrastructure, and a participant population with relatively high degrees of disposable income. Research in the literacy field can assume neither of these things.

Although Cross's categories were initially useful for helping us conceptualize the broad range of factors influencing participation, the unique character of our study population was not adequately reflected by these categories. For example, the term "situational" tends to evoke an image of temporary and fairly minor life circumstances; and yet our study population is defined by high degrees of protracted financial difficulty and its associated effects. The term "dispositional" implies personality factors or attitudes, and does not reflect the way that people's thoughts and feelings are interrelated with their historical and current life contexts. The term "institutional" does not capture the policy context of an underdeveloped infrastructure that so strongly characterizes the literacy field.

In reviewing the literature and in classifying factors for our own study, we found it more useful to develop categories that were broader in scope and that could more effectively account for the varied, overlapping and detailed factors influencing participation in literacy and upgrading programs. Replacing Cross's terms, we have grouped the factors into the following three broad, interrelated categories: socioeconomic–circumstantial (SEC), cognitive–emotive (CE), and program/policy-related (PPR). All three types of explanation provide compelling insights into patterns of participation. Unfortunately, as already mentioned, most research favours one type over the other or obscures the ways in which they interrelate.

Before elaborating on these three areas and how they affect participation, we turn to the complex issue of what actually motivates people to participate in adult literacy programs.

What motivates participation?

Motivation is a matter of controversy in the literature, and accepted thought is undergoing change. Our understanding of participation in adult literacy programs has only recently progressed beyond a deficit perspective in which those not participating in programs were labelled "motivationally deficient" and "hard-to-reach". From this perspective, adults with low literacy skills are reluctant to participate because they have negative attitudes toward education, lack self-confidence and self-esteem, and live lives of failure, dependence and passivity. More recent motivational research, however, provides an important counter-voice to this deficit model.

In the most extensive motivational study reported, Beder and Valentine (1990) demonstrated that students are motivated by a wide range of goals. Through in-person interviews with a random sample of 323 students enrolled in adult basic education (ABE) programs in Iowa, these researchers developed a typology of ten broad dimensions of motivation. The range of motivations included (but were not limited to) extrinsic benefits, such as vocational mobility and economic need; and intrinsic benefits, such as enhanced participation in community life, and increased ability to meet family responsibilities and negotiate life transitions. That motivation is multidimensional and that literacy is seen as a means to diverse ends are supported in Canadian research (ABE Student Outcomes Steering Committee 1996, 1997; Malicky and Norman 1994).

The Iowa typology (Beder and Valentine 1990) provides a meaningful framework to conceptualize motivation as multidimensional and literacy as a means to diverse ends. It indicates that literacy and ABE students are intrinsically as well as extrinsically motivated; that they consider the ends to which education will be put as well as education for its own sake; and that they are rarely motivated by a single factor alone. Because of the diversity of motivations that learners express, the research suggests a need for programs to identify and respond to the communal needs of groups of learners within specific practice and community contexts, and to consider the multifaceted nature of motivation within each individual. This knowledge can guide important decisions about effective recruitment strategies, instructional content and teaching methods. From this perspective, outreach based on assumptions about what educators think adults with low literacy skills need, or on political priorities derived from exclusively economic needs, are unlikely to bring adults to programs or to retain them (Beder 1991).

Beder's studies also show that the motivation to participate varies according to the circumstances and cycles of life. In fact, he found that the most important variable influencing participation in adult education is age; a large age-based disparity exists between the target and participant populations (Beder 1991). The research indicates that the perception of a need for literacy declines with age (Beder 1991; Quigley 1990, 1997). But, if older adults do not have seemingly overt needs to develop their literacy skills, they may have many latent needs (Beder 1990) that correspond to the special circumstances of ageing and the role of literacy in their lives. A written survey of 217 senior literacy learners in Ontario (Paul 1997) found that less than 10 percent participated to improve their literacy skills: They were primarily motivated by personal and social goals that included the desire to stimulate the mind, improve or maintain memory, be with other people, and learn new things.

That most people generally tend to be motivated to achieve some sort of higher goal has been well observed, both in life pursuits (Maslow 1987) and specifically in the context of adult education and learning (Beder and Valentine 1990; Livingstone 1999). But motivation is far from the only factor determining whether or not individuals participate in literacy programs. As the upcoming sections illustrate, many of the same reasons that motivate people can also deter them. Motivation is complex; whether people participate in programs depends largely on the interaction between various factors operating in society and on people's varied interpretations of those factors (Livingstone 2000; Rubenson 1987).

Socioeconomic–circumstantial (SEC) factors

Social, economic and political factors can make participation in formal education difficult for people with low literacy skills. Participation depends on how well an individual can meet various fundamental needs; often, "everything in a person's life has to be almost in place to make it possible" (Thomas 1990, p. 82). The lower one's socioeconomic status, the lower the rate of participation in *any* type of formal learning activity (Statistics Canada 1997; Livingstone 1999; McGivney 1990). Not surprisingly, formal income support to attend programs significantly increases people's ability to participate in literacy education (ABE Student Outcomes Steering Committee 1997; Rodriguez and Sawyer 1990). "Something as basic and as inexpensive as a bus pass can make the difference between a person's attending a program or not" (Hoddinnott 1998, p. 103). Living in geographically isolated areas may pose additional barriers for people, such as the added cost of making long-distance phone calls (da Costa 1994).

Circumstantial factors relate to individual life situations, from the general (hours of work) to the specific (a chronic health problem). Lack of time is a barrier frequently cited by potential learners; what this generally means is they are "too busy" finding work, working long hours or shift work, and negotiating other life priorities like childcare and community involvement (Perin and Greenberg 1994; Thomas 1990). Participation may be even more complicated in some rural areas where seasonal work is more common. In addition, people living in rural areas may need to overcome limited or lack of public transportation or may have to travel long distances to attend a program (Cavanagh 1996).

Research on people who drop out of programs provides extensive evidence of the impact of SEC factors (ABE Student Outcomes Steering Committee 1997; Middleton 1999). Even how people participate in programs, such as frequently dropping out and then returning or intending to return (called "stopping out"), tells us a great deal about the prevalence of socioeconomic and circumstantial factors and their capacity to affect people's lives (Thomas 1990). Being "of limited means" constrains one's ability to absorb sudden changes; even a minor car repair can be a financial crisis. Many learners may be "just one circumstance away" from dropping out. Furthermore, in the face of other urgent needs, the benefits of improving literacy skills may seem inconsequential.

Research suggests that people with low literacy skills are keenly aware of the social, economic and political forces besides literacy that shape their lives (Fagan 1988). In light of systemic and political factors beyond individual control, improving one's literacy skills may seem a weak tool against economic displacement or poverty, educational inequality, and other social conditions (NAPO 1992; Ziegahn 1991). Achieving a higher level of literacy skill may be less important than having credentials (Hoddinnott 1998), especially in the current context of underemployment, when highly credentialed people are increasingly filling jobs previously occupied by those with fewer formal credentials (Livingstone 2000). This may be one of the reasons why a longitudinal study by Malicky and Norman (1994) found that the initial job-related optimism of more than 80 percent of the 94 learners led to discouragement in reaction to the realities of the labour market.

Cognitive–emotive (CE) factors

CE factors influencing participation are well-documented in the literature and refer to the broad range of psychological orientations, attitudes, expectations and perceptions of adults with low literacy skills—often reported in terms of low self-confidence and fear of failure (Beder 1991; Hayes 1988; Malicky and Norman 1994). One of the most powerful is the sense of stigma that can accompany low literacy. Attending a program discloses one's level of literacy; adults who have internalized a sense of stigma may opt instead to hide low literacy skills (Martini and Page 1996; Rodriguez and Sawyer 1990). The desire to maintain confidentiality or anonymity in programs can be especially complicated for those who live in small communities and rural areas (da Costa 1994).

Some authors point out the importance of not confusing these psychological factors with global personality traits when they may, in fact, sometimes represent situation-specific responses to the challenge of taking on something new and difficult (Beder 1991), such as a fear of particular tasks required in the educational process (Hayes 1988). Others challenge the portrayal of those with low literacy skills as being fearful and lacking in confidence. Fingeret (1988) identified the active roles that low-literate adults fill, in social networks where literacy is viewed as only one of many competencies. She points out that programs may not correspond with the meaning of people's lives and may therefore seem irrelevant. She proposes that adults with low literacy skills are not necessarily passive and dependent, but may be highly interdependent, functioning or improving their literacy skills within the context of their lives and through the use of social networks (Fingeret 1983). In this mutual exchange, adults who rely on friends, family and co-workers for the performance of reading and writing tasks may offer other skills and knowledge in exchange.

People also direct their lives and make choices based on their experience and values. Certain aspects of the SEC and CE perspectives on nonparticipation have come under fire by some researchers (Fingeret 1983; Quigley 1990, 1992) who argue that it is problematic to view adult learners through a "deficit perspective" that constructs them as powerless and essentially without agency. Quigley (1990, 1992) argues that to see nonparticipation strictly as a structural issue is to "effectively diminish a perceived capacity for human agency among nonparticipants" and to "reinforce stereotypes of illiterate adults as fearful, suspicious victims of socioeconomic circumstances who are incapable of utilizing the educational opportunities extended them" (Quigley 1990, p. 104–105). Quigley concurs with Giroux (1983) that "resistance must be viewed from a theoretical starting point that links the display of behaviour to the interest it embodies, going beyond the immediacy of behaviour to the interest that underlies its often hidden logic" (p. 282).

Quigley (1990, 1992) attempts to apply resistance theory to the topic of nonparticipation. In one study (1990), he analyzed 10 works of fiction and found that rebel characters reject formal schooling because it infringes on their sense of self and values. He applied insights from literature to a later study (1992) of 20 individuals who had made conscious decisions not to participate in literacy programs. In both fiction and fact, Quigley found that what nonparticipants actively rejected was not *learning and education*, but *school and schooling*.

Quigley found three types of "resisters" in his interviews—individuals who felt at cultural or class odds with teachers, other students, or the intentions of the school (e.g., to prepare them for certain jobs):

- Personal/emotive resisters, who spoke of teacher insensitivity and alienation from peers
- Age-related resisters—those over the age of 50 who do not see schooling as being very relevant to their daily lives
- Ideological/cultural resisters, who spoke at a macro or systemic level

Quigley's findings relate to work by Ziegahn (1991) in which he found that adults with low literacy skills could comfortably discuss their learning, categorized as the desire to understand results and apply knowledge, respond to a challenge, and pass on knowledge, but could not comfortably discuss learning within a formal schooling environment. Similarly, a study by Courtney, Jha and Babchuk (1994) identified students' perceptions of how much the classroom was "like school" as the core variable influencing the way they interpreted and negotiated their participation in the ABE program classroom. This study suggests that dropout in the early phases of participation may have more to do with the context of the classroom experience than with factors associated with students' lives outside the classroom.

Other research shows that attrition most commonly occurs in the critical first three weeks of participation (Kambouri and Francis 1994; Quigley 1997) and that those who drop out are more likely to have experienced previous difficulties in school (Dirkx and Jha 1994). A study in Alberta (Malicky and Norman 1994) found that Canadian-born and immigrant students differed significantly in their prior school experience, and that this difference was related to subsequent attrition. Canadians reported experiencing more difficulties in school and more social and psychological reasons for not completing school. Dropout rates for the Canadian-born group were dramatically higher than for the immigrant group (69 percent versus 39 percent) and were highest of all among Canadian-born men (79 percent).

These findings challenge us to see nonparticipation from a new, more critical perspective and to consider CE factors previously overlooked.

Program- and policy-related (PPR) factors

Any exploration of participation patterns must also critically examine PPR factors and ask, Are programs visible, available, accessible, and effective? And yet, few studies incorporate this important component of analysis. Many adults do not participate because they are not aware of programs or how to find them (Middleton 1999; Long 1996; Rodriguez and Sawyer 1990). In some communities, there are no programs (Hoddinnott 1998; Thomas 1990). Where they do exist, literacy may be taught at an inappropriate skill level, with inappropriate instructional approaches (Middleton 1999; Rodriguez and Sawyer 1990), or held at awkward, inflexible class times (Beder 1990). Unfavourable physical conditions, complicated and depersonalized enrolment and registration procedures, and difficulties in finding course information are also significant barriers (ABE Student Outcomes Steering Committee 1996). Many of these PPR barriers carry significant weight in less populated and more isolated communities. Not only does this make outreach efforts more difficult and lead to a disproportionate lack of awareness in rural areas, but people from rural communities may also have limited access to the programs even when aware of them (da Costa 1994).

Resourcing issues can create problems with staff hours, shortages of tutors (Long 1998), reductions in telephone services and program follow-up (Middleton 1999), a lack of services for people with learning or physical disabilities, long waiting lists, insufficient childcare options, inadequate facilities (Thomas 1990), and costs for tuition and materials (Hoddinnott 1998).

Where do we go from here?

Patterns of participation are not easily compartmentalized. As in the analogy about the elephant, much of the participation research presents factors in narrow terms, ignoring the important overlap and interrelationship among factors. For example, even a single issue (childcare, for example) can relate to all three categories: unaffordable or unavailable childcare is an SEC barrier; an assumption that the program is "not for single parents like me" is a CE barrier; and unavailability of on-site childcare is a PPR barrier. Multiple factors are likely to be operating simultaneously though differentially, depending on the person and the situation.

Future research should direct us toward shaping clear theoretical models and integrated explanations of participation in literacy programs. The current study attempts to make a significant step toward this goal. ☐

Chapter Three

How did we study patterns of participation?

We undertook a six-to-eight-month telephone follow-up with a large sample of Canadians attempting to access literacy services. Help with sampling methods was enlisted through Statistics Canada and Institute for Social Research at York University. From a pool of 314 groups working in cooperation with ABC CANADA's LEARN campaign, a random sample of 60, stratified by province and territory, was drawn. The sample includes community-based providers, school boards, community colleges, phone referral lines, government literacy agencies, literacy networks, and urban and rural groups. Of the 60 groups, 55 (92 percent) agreed to ask enquiring callers in January and February of 1999 for permission to be called back by ABC CANADA. Callers to be considered for follow-up included potential learners over the age of 16 years, or family members or friends calling on behalf of potential learners.

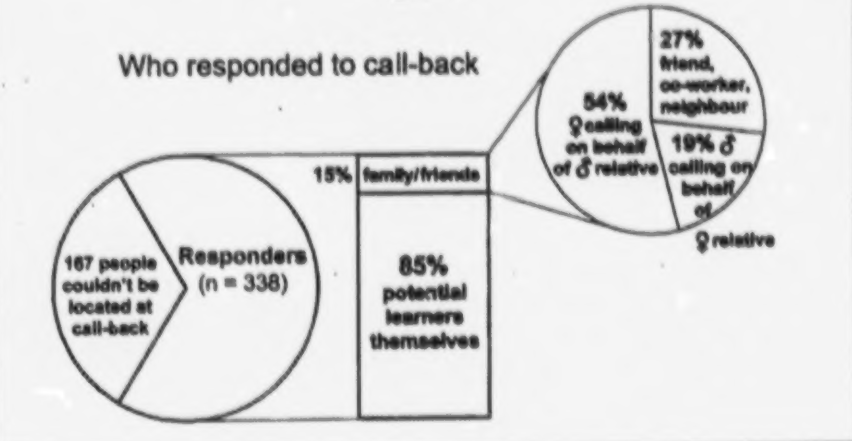
During January and February, 729 people called the 55 literacy groups that participated in our study. Of these, 505 provided a return telephone number and gave permission for a follow-up call six to eight months later; these people constituted the body of callers eligible for survey. The Institute for Social Research at York University in Toronto, Ontario, made up to 20 calls to each number in late August through early October, during evening, weekend and daytime hours. In the end, 338 people were interviewed, a response rate of 67 percent.

Of these 338 callers, about 85 percent were potential learners themselves and 15 percent were family or friends calling on behalf of potential learners (Figure 1). Of the calls from friends or family members, more than half were women calling on behalf of male relatives, and about one-fifth, men calling on behalf of female relatives. The remainder of calls (27 percent) were from friends, neighbours or co-workers of potential learners. Although only the individuals who made the intial call to the literacy program or group were called back, the information in this report pertains to the potential learners themselves, whom we refer to as "callers" regardless of who placed the initial call.

Most of those we could not reach had likely moved: Their numbers were out of service, with no forwarding number. Because our findings are missing both the people reluctant to discuss their situation with a government agency and the most transient portion of the overall sample,

- Enrolment figures may be overestimated.
- Dropout rates may be underestimated.
- Callers who speak English as a second language may be underestimated.
- Callers receiving social assistance may be underestimated.
- The impact of SEC factors may be underestimated.

Figure 1



Who responded to call-back

Of the five groups not included, two affect our sample's representativeness: French Quebec (constituting about 25 percent of Canada's population) was not represented because the organization through which all French calls are directed declined to participate; and the Yukon, because of a technical error in obtaining permissions to call back. The Northwest Territories received no learner-related calls during the study period; Nunavut was not yet formed. With these exceptions, the selection method and the willingness of so many groups to participate provided good overall representation in nine provinces, including rural as well as urban areas. Those contacted were 40 percent in Western Canada (versus 27 percent in the general population), 50 percent in Central Canada (versus 38 percent in Ontario and 2 percent in English Quebec), and 10 percent in Eastern Canada (8 percent in the general population). Because some literacy groups have a relatively small clientele, the groups can't be identified without risking the successful identification of some of the learners quoted in this report.

The interview questionnaire was adapted from the survey developed for the Literacy BC tracking study (Middleton 1999), and was substantially strengthened according to the lessons learned therein. Our questionnaire was also informed by current literature on participation and several education surveys, including the recent New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL) survey by the National Research Network (Livingstone 1999). After extensive consultation with our advisory group of practitioners and academics, and pilot interviews with 12 eligible participants, we reworked the questions considerably.

The telephone interviews averaged 19 minutes in length. Although the wording protocol was strict, interviewers from the Institute for Social Research were also trained to ensure sensitivity in making these follow-up calls. The survey questionnaire (see Appendix) covered demographic information about potential learners; motivations for looking into, enrolling in, and finishing or dropping out of literacy programs, as applicable; the barriers, constraints, and disincentives experienced; and the sequence of events affecting participation in programs.

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The questionnaire was designed to capture a depth of information about the full range of reasons respondents had for not enrolling or for dropping out. Once respondents were asked for their ***main*** reason, they were then prompted through a series of open- and closed-ended questions, for their ***contributing*** reasons. In the upcoming discussions about enrolment and retention, it is important to note the difference between main reasons and what we've called composite factors. A person's main reason is relatively exclusive—the first, the most influential, and sometimes the only reason offered for not enrolling or for dropping out. Composite factors, on the other hand, are inclusive; they are multiple and embrace all the reasons cited (including the main reason). The distinction between main reasons and composite factors is important to the interpretation of the percentages stated in this report.

The construction of the survey, the size of the sample, and the methods of analysis allow us to capture the influence of multiple, interacting factors, in order to forge new conceptual ground that moves us further toward being able to predict (and therefore influence) patterns of participation in literacy and upgrading programs. However, the study has a number of limitations.

Even though the sample for this study is the largest of its kind and was difficult and expensive to construct, in statistical terms the sample is relatively small. For example, the sample size does not allow for the type of statistical analysis (e.g., factor analysis) that would be needed to meet some of the more theoretical ideals laid out in Chapter Two. Furthermore, at present national baseline statistics are unavailable on who calls literacy and upgrading programs, which means that we cannot calculate probability of selection. This places various tests of statistical significance outside of our reach. Still, because of the way in which the sample was collected, we can feel confident that this study identifies definite trends in patterns of participation in Canadian literacy and upgrading programs. ☐

Chapter Four

What did we find out about patterns of participation?

A. Who we spoke with
B. Making contact
C. Reasons for calling
D. Enrolment and nonenrolment
E. Dropping out of programs
F. Learners' experiences of programs

A. Who we spoke with

This section provides a demographic overview of our sample (see Table 1). Demographic characteristics often have a strong impact on patterns of participation and the reasons for them; these characteristics also interact with each other, leading to unique outcomes for various groups. The background characteristics we looked at were gender, age, formal education, language of greatest fluency, size of home community, employment status and annual household income. In the sections that follow, many of these demographic characteristics will be shown to relate to the experiences of potential learners as they attempt to access literacy or upgrading programs.

Gender and age

Just over half (53 percent) of callers were women. Because Canadian women generally have somewhat higher levels of prose literacy than men (Statistics Canada 1994), it therefore appears that men may be underrepresented among callers to the 55 literacy groups who participated in this study.

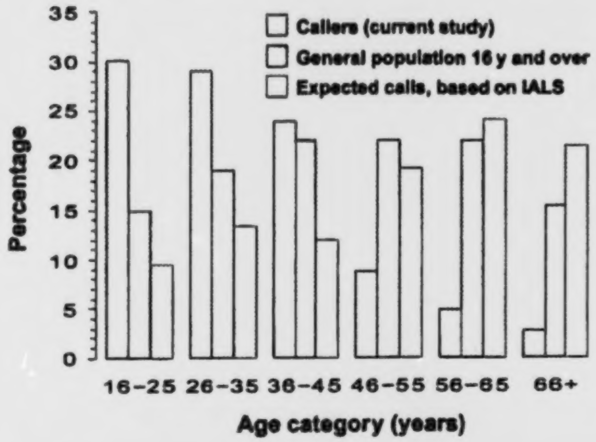
Although callers ranged from 16 to 79 years of age, most (82 percent) were younger than age 45 and were fairly equally distributed across the three youngest age categories (see Table 1). **Those older than age 45 were strikingly underrepresented, both in relation to their numbers in** the general population and rates of literacy among older people. Figure 2 combines demographics for age and prose literacy to indicate what the age distribution of callers to literacy programs would be, if older potential learners did not select themselves out.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of callers

Category	*% of callers*
All callers	100
Sex	
Male	47
Female	53
Age category	
16–24	27
25–34	29
35–44	26
45+	18
Level of formal education	
Less than grade 5	7
Grades 5–9	28
Grades 10–12/13 (no diploma)	35
High-school graduate	18
At least some postsecondary	12
Community size	
Fewer than 15,000	30
15,000–99,999	15
100,000–499,999	26
500,000+	29
Employment status	
Full-time employment	31
Part-time employment	16
Receiving social assistance	28
Other income	25
Annual household income	
Less than $20,000	47
$20,000–29,999	27
$30,000–39,999	6
$40,000+	20
Language of greatest fluency	
English	82
Other	18

Figure 2

Actual versus expected distribution of callers, by population and IALS prose-scale results



Another striking pattern is that among callers between the ages of 16 and 24 (Figure 3), a disproportionate number were male (59 percent); whereas among those between 25 and 34, a disproportion were female (63 percent). We cannot offer any particular explanation for this pattern, but it is pronounced enough to warrant further investigation.

Formal education

Callers had a wide range of formal education. Somewhat surprisingly, more than a third of those who called had a high-school diploma or some postsecondary education. Seven percent had less than grade 5, and more than a quarter had between grades 5 and 9. The largest group, more than one-third, had been to secondary school but did not graduate. About 16 percent of callers (10 percent men and 6 percent women) identified themselves as having a learning disability, though few had been formally assessed.

Overall, women were more likely than men to report higher levels of formal education, a finding that matches patterns in the general population, where women on the whole have higher levels of basic education up to high-school graduation (Statistics Canada 1996). In our study, women were somewhat more likely than men (32 percent versus 29 percent) to report having graduated from high school or to have taken at least some postsecondary education.

There was a strong relationship between age and highest level of formal education. Similar to patterns in the general population, older callers had lower levels of formal education than younger callers. For example, close to 60 percent of those older than age 45 had less than grade 10 education, compared with only one-fifth of those between the ages of 16 and 24. This pattern held for all educational levels except the postsecondary; those in the youngest age group were less likely to have postsecondary schooling than those in older age groups. This is to be expected, given that those just out of secondary school would not have had the same amount of time to undertake postsecondary education.

Overall, potential learners were evenly divided in their experience of formal education: About half said their early school experiences were somewhat or very positive, and about half said their experiences were somewhat or very negative. Men were somewhat more likely to report negative early experiences than women (54 percent and 44 percent, respectively), and those in the smallest communities were more likely to say that their early experiences were positive (more than six in ten).

There was a strong and consistent relationship between the perceived quality of early experiences and the level of formal education achieved (Table 2): The less formal education callers had, the more likely they were to report early negative school experiences. Few of our other findings are more consistent or more dramatic. As we shall see, these early experiences are profoundly related to callers' later experiences with literacy and upgrading programs.

Table 2
Callers' feelings about their early educational experience, by highest level of formal education attained

Education	*Very negative*	*Negative*	*Positive*	*Very positive*	*Total*
Less than Grade 5	61%	28%	5.6%	5.6%	100%
Grade 5–9	32	25	28	15	100
Gr. 10+ (no diploma)	19	28	43	9.7	100
High-school diploma	12	27	41	20	100
Some postsecondary	8.8	8.8	32	50	100
All callers*	23	25	35	18	101

* adds up to 101 percent because of rounding

Language

English, spoken most fluently by more than 80 percent of callers, was overwhelmingly the main language among potential learners. More than three-quarters of callers had received their earlier education in Canada. A significant exception to the language pattern was that nearly two-thirds of those with at least some postsecondary education reported being more fluent in a language other than English (Figure 4).

Community size

Callers were almost equally divided between smaller and larger communities. Nearly half lived in communities with populations of fewer than 100,000; two-thirds of these lived in relatively rural areas with fewer than 15,000 people. Of the 55 percent dwelling in larger communities, nearly three in ten lived in cities of at least 500,000 people.

Figure 3

Sex distribution of callers, by age

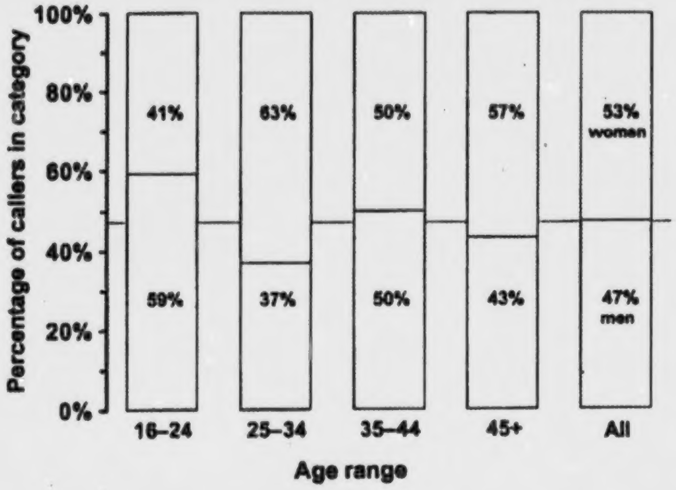
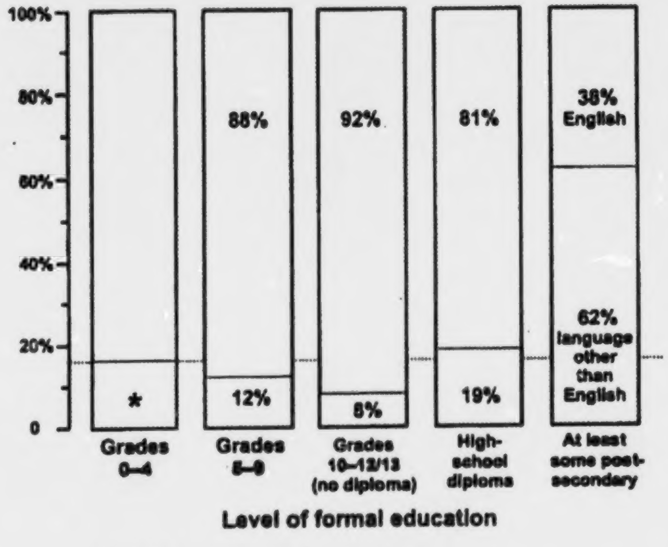


Figure 4

Language of greatest fluency, by level of formal education



* Number of cases too small for an estimate

Consistent with Canadian census data, community size was strongly related to levels of formal education. Our study found that potential learners with higher levels of education were more likely to live in cities. For example, while just over a quarter of potential learners had either a high-school diploma or some postsecondary education, nearly 40 percent of those living in cities larger than 500,000 population were callers with at least a diploma. A larger proportion of those with less than grade 5 reported living in smaller communities.

Employment status

Nearly half of the potential learners were employed either full-time (31 percent) or part-time (16 percent). More than one-quarter were receiving some form of social assistance, while the remaining quarter either had no income or were supported by other family members. Approximately one-quarter of those on social assistance had been encouraged or required to take a program by their counsellors.

Of those who were employed full- or part-time, 59 percent were men and 36 percent were women. Overall, women were less likely to be working full-time and more likely to have "other" (or no) income, but were only slightly more likely than men to be receiving social assistance.

While we might have expected some relationship between age and employment status, we found none. The expected relationship between formal educational level and employment status was borne out in limited ways. Callers with the least formal education (less than grade 5) were considerably less likely to be employed—only 30 percent, compared to 47 percent for the entire group of potential learners we spoke with. And yet, callers with the most formal education (at least some postsecondary) were also less likely to be employed; they were, however, less likely to be receiving social assistance.

Employment status was related to community size. Of those callers who lived in cities of over 100,000 people, a majority were employed. In contrast, three-quarters of potential learners living in communities of 15,000–99,999 were without paid employment, and more than 40 percent were receiving social assistance—larger proportions than among those in either smaller or larger communities.

Household income

We found that the majority of potential literacy learners lived in households with limited annual incomes. Specifically, nearly half (47 percent) reported annual *total household* incomes of less than $20,000, and another quarter (27 percent) had household incomes between $20,000 and $30,000.

As mentioned, there was a strong relationship between employment status and gender. The relationship between household income and age was not linear; potential learners in the youngest and oldest groups were most likely to have annual household incomes below $20,000. Between income and education, the relationship was also strong. The proportion of callers with household incomes of less than $20,000 declined dramatically, from nearly six in ten of those with grade 9 or less of formal schooling to less than three in ten of those with at least some postsecondary education. For those with household incomes of more than $40,000, the pattern was essentially the reverse: The proportion of callers with higher incomes increased through the five categories of formal schooling. Those with diplomas were twice as likely as those with grade 5 to 9 to be in the highest income group (more than $40,000).

The notable exception to this pattern was that potential learners with less than grade 5 were just as likely as those with a high-school diploma to be have higher household incomes. This may be a result of the ages of those with less than grade 5, of whom a majority were older than 45 years and therefore more likely to have established employment.

Perhaps as expected, the relationship between annual household income and employment status was pronounced. Those on social assistance were especially likely to have the lowest incomes, with more than 80 percent reporting household incomes of less than $20,000 per year. In addition, 44 percent of those employed part-time had household incomes below $20,000, compared with 27 percent of full-time workers.

The proportion of callers with the lowest household incomes declined nearly 20 percent as community size increased: from 57 percent and 56 percent in rural communities and small towns, respectively, to 43 percent and 39 percent in cities over 100,000 and over 500,000, respectively. This may reflect the availability of additional better-paying jobs in larger cities, the fact that lower-paying jobs are marginally better paid in larger cities (to compensate for higher costs of living), or other explanations.

Summary

The potential literacy learners in this study constituted a broad cross-section of Canadians, coming from all age groups, from communities large and small, and having a very wide range of formal education. Less than half of potential learners were employed; less than one-third, employed full-time. Around one-quarter of potential learners were receiving social assistance.

The women who were seeking literacy or upgrading programs were more likely to be somewhat older and to have more formal education (including some postsecondary) than the men. The women in the survey were much less likely than the men to be employed full-time, and far more likely to have "other" or no household income.

Potential learners older than age 45 were more likely to live in large cities. Potential learners with more formal education were also more likely to live in cities, and those with less formal education, in smaller communities. As well, callers in cities were more likely to be employed.

In towns with populations between 15,000 and 99,999 a considerably larger proportion of potential learners received social assistance rather than employment income. Those on social assistance lived overwhelmingly in households with the lowest incomes, while callers who were employed full-time were most likely to be in households with the highest incomes. Both the youngest and oldest potential learners were more likely to have the lowest household incomes. As well, the larger the community, the more likely potential learners were to have higher household incomes.

The strongest relationship to income, however, occurred with formal schooling. The likelihood of being in a household receiving the lowest category of annual income declined dramatically as the level of previous education increased. This relationship may be accounted for, at least in part, by the fact that the proportion of potential learners who were employed increased with formal education—with the exception of those with some postsecondary education. Callers with at least some postsecondary education were much more likely to report their greatest fluency in a language other than English.

Finally, the data suggest a strong relationship between formal educational level and the feelings of potential learners about their previous education: the more formal education, the more positive the caller's feelings about their overall educational experience.

I heard about it from my co-worker.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 22.

I saw a pamphlet on a billboard.

Man with grade 10–12, age 35.

B. Making contact

Of those we spoke with, more than three-quarters had never previously contacted a literacy group. A large proportion (43 percent) of these callers told us that a lack of information was the main reason they had not called earlier. Before calling a literacy group, an individual must, of course, find out that it exists, and locate its contact information—the telephone number or address. Callers in our study (potential learners and family/friends) accomplished this through a range of sources, from word of mouth to public media. Understanding more about these patterns can greatly inform outreach efforts.

How callers became aware of programs

As the upper pie-chart in Figure 5 shows, the majority of callers gained awareness of literacy groups from three main sources. Most sources (55 percent) involved personal contact of some kind: 32 percent of callers indicated that they had become aware of literacy programs through family or friends; 23 percent, through an existing school, program or community group. The proportion of potential learners who gained awareness through community groups or agencies was inversely related to household income: Whereas nearly one-quarter of callers with household incomes below $20,000 heard through community groups or agencies, less than 10 percent of those with incomes of more than $40,000 heard through these types of sources. Callers with some postsecondary education were more likely than others to have heard about programs through family or friends. Younger people between the ages of 18 and 24 were more likely than other callers to have become aware through community groups and other agencies.

Nonpersonal sources made up most of the remaining responses: More than 40 percent of callers cited the media or telephone books as their primary source of awareness. Potential learners with the least amount of formal education (less than grade 5) and learners older than age 45 were most likely to gain awareness of literacy programs through the media; they composed nearly half the learners in these groups. Nearly half of callers in larger cities found out about groups through the media.

When it came to locating specific contact information (Figure 5, lower pie-chart), the phone book became very important: 40 percent of callers used these sources to get the information they needed to contact the literacy group. The methods through which callers located the necessary contact information revealed no obvious associations with any demographic characteristics.

Public awareness campaigns

At the point of placing the initial phone call to a literacy group, almost three-quarters of callers had seen or heard an advertisement about adults going back to school. (We did not ask the source of these ads.) Those with less formal education were somewhat more likely to have seen or heard such ads: more than eight in ten of those with grade 9 or less, compared to about seven in ten of those with grades 10 to 13 (including those who had a diploma) and only six in ten of those with at least some postsecondary education. As well, older callers were more likely than younger callers to have heard or seen the ads.

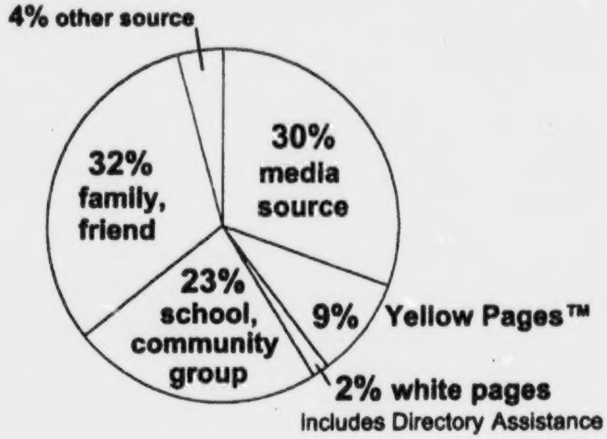
Potential learners who recalled seeing or hearing advertisements were also asked if the ads had influenced them to call. A clear majority (57 percent) of those who had heard or seen the ads said that they had been influential. Men were somewhat more likely to say they had been influenced than women (60 percent versus 54 percent). There was a linear relationship between being influenced by the ads and previous education: Two-thirds of those with less than grade 5 said that the ads had an effect on them, declining to half of those with a high-school diploma and just 45 percent of those with some postsecondary education.

I saw it in the Yellow Pages. I called and they referred me.

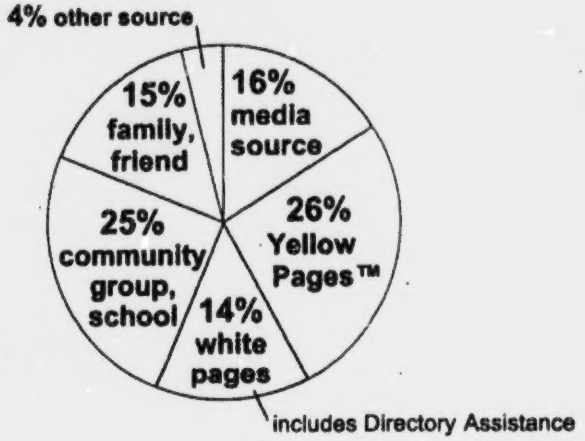
Woman with grade 10–12, age 52.

Figure 5

How callers became aware of the literacy group



How callers located contact information



I've always known about the program because this is a small town.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 20.

While potential learners in the smallest communities were just as likely as others to have seen or heard the ads, they were the least likely to have been influenced by them (46 percent). Those employed full-time were less likely than others to have heard or seen the ads (although seven in ten did); and of these, less than half (46 percent) said the ads had influenced them to approach literacy programs.

Summary

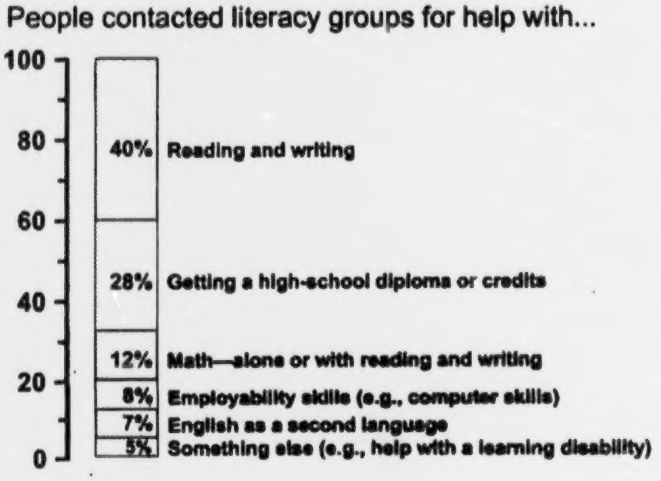
Most of the potential learners were first-time callers, who learned about literacy groups and how to contact them through a wide variety of methods. The great majority remembered seeing or hearing advertisements, and most had been influenced by the ads to call a literacy group. Although all demographic groups were significantly influenced by the ads, they were particularly effective among people with little formal education and those in larger urban areas.

C. Reasons for calling

When people contact a literacy group, they can have either general or specific reasons. Our survey asked two broad sets of questions, one about the type of program the caller was looking for (the goal for calling) and another about motivations for wanting such a program. Taken together, these questions provided us with a useful picture of the reasons why potential learners want to participate in literacy or upgrading programs. This section examines callers' goals and motivations in relation to background characteristics, revealing a number of interesting patterns. The degree to which policy, programming and practice can take into account these types of demographic variations will greatly influence the effectiveness of service delivery.

Figure 6

Goals for calling



Goals for calling

As can be seen from Figure 6, 40 percent of callers were seeking help with reading and writing, and more than one-quarter of callers wanted to pursue a high-school diploma. The remaining callers were seeking math, alone or along with reading and writing (12 percent); specific employability skills, for example, training on computers or some other vocational skill (8 percent); English as a second language (ESL) programs (7 percent); or something else (5 percent), such as help with a learning disability.

I wanted to do something challenging and to finish my education.

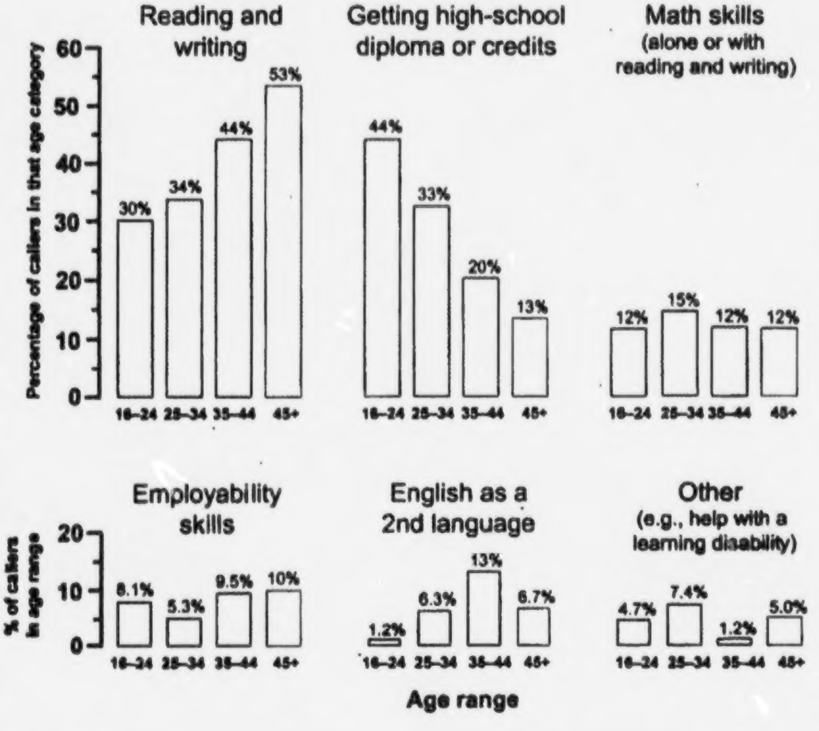
Woman with high-school diploma, age 37.

Background characteristics in relation to reason for calling

Different types of potential learners were often seeking different kinds of programs. For example, older learners were far more likely than younger learners to be seeking the specific skills of reading and writing, and far less likely to be pursuing a high-school diploma (Figure 7). This

Figure 7

Main reason (goal) for call, by age



I need help to clarify manuals at work because the way they're worded is difficult for me to understand.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 35.

I really want to go to college for a welding program, and I need this first.

Man with grade 10–12, age 25.

latter goal is more within the reach of younger callers because they are more likely than older callers to have higher levels of formal education. Callers who were closest to obtaining a diploma were ten times as likely as those with the least amount of formal education (less than grade 5) to have identified getting a diploma as their main reason for seeking help. Callers' stated reasons for calling appear to represent "the next logical step" in relation to current skill or education levels, but were not necessarily an expression of long-term aspirations.

As might be expected, the largest group seeking employability skills were those who already had a secondary-school diploma; more than one-third of those who had graduated from high school offered this reason. Three in ten of those with some postsecondary training wanted help with ESL, reflecting the high proportion of callers with at least some postsecondary education who are fluent in other languages.

Urban callers were more likely to seek help for reading and writing and for ESL, while rural callers and those on social assistance were considerably more likely to express a desire for employability skills. No patterns were apparent for gender, employment status or income level, with one exception: More than three-quarters of those wanting help with numeracy were from households with annual incomes below $30,000.

Motivations for calling

The main motivations for seeking particular programs are reported in Figure 8, where we have categorized them as intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivations are subclassified into responses involving personal well-being (for example, increasing self-confidence) and daily/social/family responses, which include improving daily living skills (such as filling out forms, banking, or shopping), ways to increase social participation, and upgrading for the sake of children or at the urging of family members. Extrinsic goals include responses about improving literacy to get or keep a job (or get a better job) and upgrading for retraining, such as improving reading skills before registering for a certificate or degree program. Note that we classified the desire to improve one's general education to be an intrinsic, inwardly directed motivation, rather than an extrinsic response to employment pressures. In reality, this more global motivation can readily be related to both intrinsic and extrinsic goals.

More respondents cited intrinsic motivations than extrinsic motivations (58 percent versus 42 percent), although both types were clearly important. Of the potential learners who offered job-related goals as their main reason for wanting to improve their literacy skills, nearly three-quarters wanted help in order to get a job, while the rest were nearly equally divided between those who wanted help to keep a job and those working toward a promotion (Figure 9).

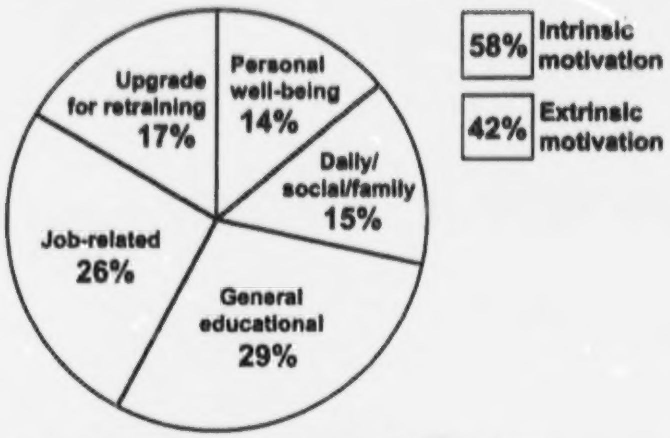
Background characteristics in relation to motivations for calling

A number of background characteristics are related to the motivations of prospective literacy learners. For example, younger respondents were much more likely to have extrinsic motivations than older respondents (45 percent versus 30 percent; Figure 10).

The relationship between the size of community and motivations for seeking literacy programs is striking (Figure 11). Extrinsic goals were offered by about half of callers in the smallest communities (fewer than 500,000 people), but less than a third of those in the largest communi-

Figure 8

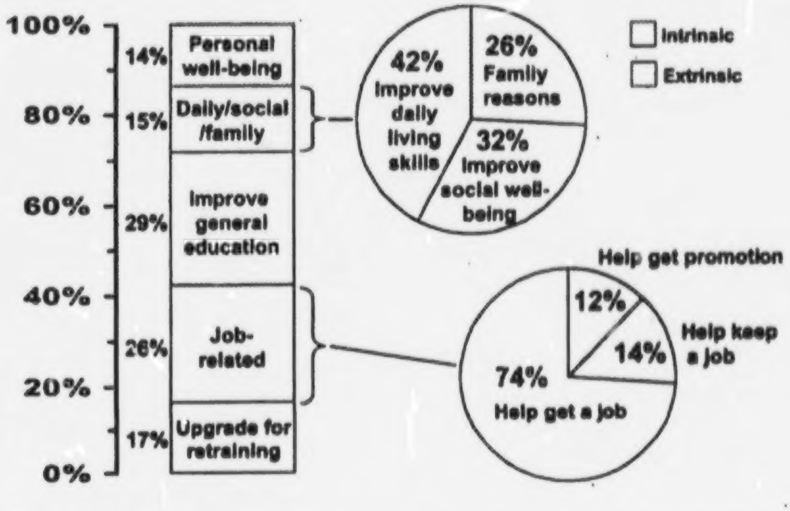
Main motivation for seeking program



Because of rounding, percentages do not add up to exactly 100%.

Figure 9

Breakdown of main motivation for seeking program



I want to know what's going on in the world.

Woman with grade 0–4, age 68.

My wife used to do my paperwork, but she passed away, so now I have to do it.

Man with grade 10–12, age 45.

I want to do this for myself and for my kids, in case they have questions about school.

Woman with grade 5–9, age 20.

I wanted to do it for health reasons. I suffer from high anxiety because of illiteracy.

Man with grade 10–12, age 58.

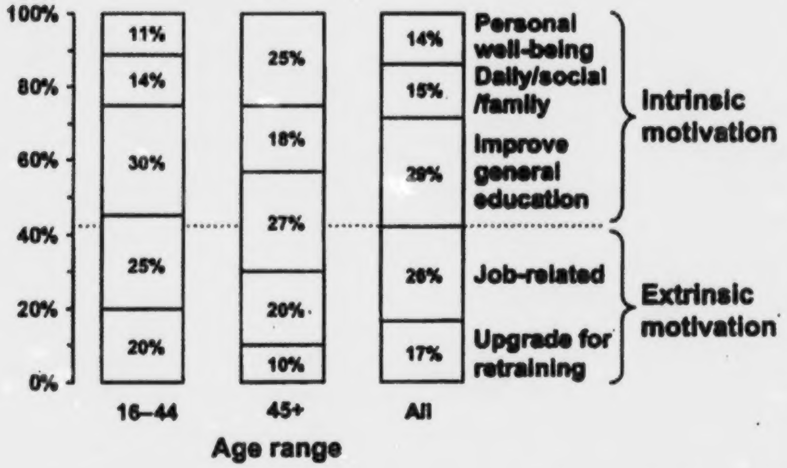


Figure 10

Main motivation, by age

ties (500,000 inhabitants or more). While constituting less than 30 percent of all potential learners, callers living in cities with populations of 500,000 or more accounted for half of those citing personal well-being as their main motivation.

In contrast, relationships between callers' formal educational levels and the main motivations they reported were relatively weak. However, those with lower levels of formal education were less likely to report wanting to upgrade for retraining, and those with the least formal schooling were more likely to cite daily/social/family reasons. Potential learners who reported some postsecondary education were just as likely as other callers to cite job- or training-related motivations.

Finally, there were no prominent relationships between gender, employment or income and the motivations of potential learners. Contrary to expectations, women were only slightly more likely to report intrinsic reasons than men. Interestingly, there was little relationship between motivations and employment status. Potential learners who were employed (both full-time and part-time) were no more or less likely to offer job-related reasons than those on social assistance or callers with "other" income. Variation by income was unremarkable; however, the general pattern is that the proportion of callers with extrinsic goals declined as reported household incomes increased.

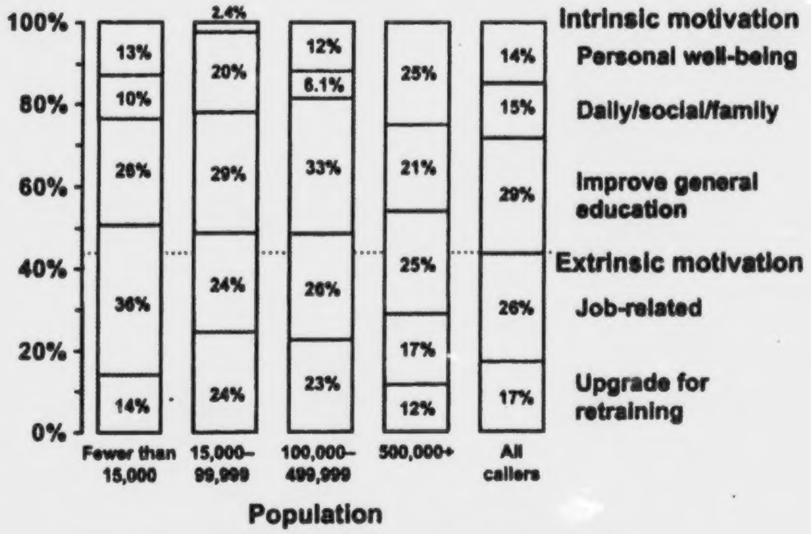
Summary

This section has illustrated that potential learners have a broad diversity of goals and motivations for seeking literacy or upgrading programs and that background factors play a variable but influential role.

Older callers and those with lower levels of formal education were most likely to want help developing the specific skills of reading and writing; the goal of working toward a high-school diploma was

Figure 11

Main motivation, by community size



Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

> ***I want to go to university and become a lawyer. There aren't too many aboriginal lawyers. I'm tired of seeing the injustice.***
>
> Man with grade 5–9, age 35.

not as readily articulated by people in these groups. Similarly, motivations relating to jobs or retraining were stated primarily by younger callers and those with at least a high-school diploma. Callers living in smaller communities and those with lower household incomes were more likely to offer extrinsic motivations than those in the largest communities or with higher household incomes.

D. Enrolment and nonenrolment

This section addresses key questions about *how many* of those who contact literacy groups go on to enrol in programs, *who* enrols and who doesn't, and the *why*'s behind both of these outcomes. The section opens with an outline of patterns of enrolment and then moves to a detailed exploration of the factors associated with nonenrolment. Understanding what deters successful program participation in general and for various demographic groups will help us recognize how to strengthen practice, programming and policy to better facilitate participation.

Patterns of enrolment

Less than half (47 percent) of those who contacted the 55 literacy groups in this study enrolled in programs (Figure 12). Table 3 reports the proportions of potential learners who enrolled for each of the seven background characteristics outlined in section A of this chapter.

Table 3
Enrolment, by demographic characteristics

Category	*% of callers*	*% who enrolled*
All callers	100	47
Sex		
Male	47	50
Female	53	44
Age category		
16–24	27	49
25–34	29	39
35–44	26	54
45+	18	50
Level of formal education		
Less than grade 5	7	65
Grades 5–9	28	48
Grades 10–12/13 (no diploma)	35	47
High-school graduate	18	39
At least some postsecondary	12	43
Community size		
Fewer than 15,000	30	52
15,000–99,999	15	50
100,000–499,999	26	56
500,000+	29	32
Employment status		
Full-time employment	31	50
Part-time employment	16	32
Receiving social assistance	28	49
Other income	25	50
Annual household income		
Less than $20,000	47	49
$20,000–29,999	27	46
$30,000–39,999	6	42
$40,000+	20	45
Language of greatest fluency		
English	82	48
Other	18	40

Demographic variables accounted for much of the variation in enrolment patterns. Half of all male callers eventually enrolled, compared to 44 percent of all female callers (Figure 13). Younger potential learners were relatively less likely to enrol in literacy programs. Although the changes between three of the age groups were small, the enrolment rate reached a distinct minimum in the age category of 25 to 34 years (39 percent; Figure 14). This appears to be partially related to the disproportionately larger number of female callers found in this age range. People in this age range are more likely to have young children. The peak enrolment rate (54 percent) occurred in the next older category, among those aged 35 to 44.

Figure 12

Enrolment rate

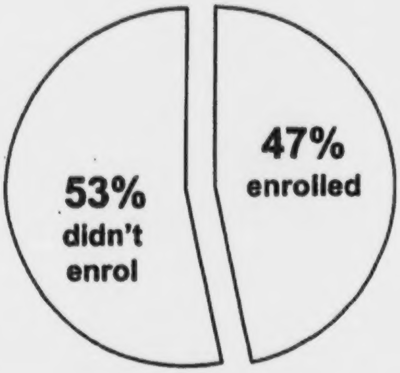
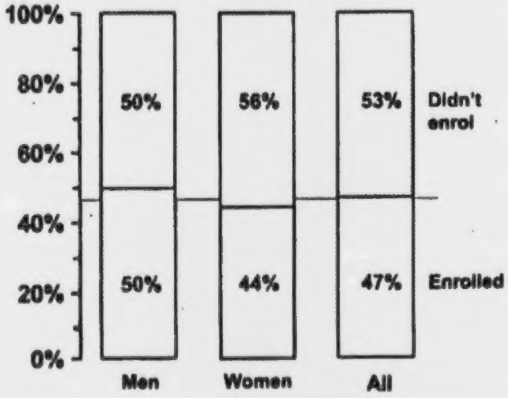


Figure 13

Enrolment, by sex



Level of education interacted strongly with rates of enrolment (Figure 15). While a minority of people in all but one of the educational groups enrolled, enrolment was especially low among those with a high-school diploma (39 percent). Nearly two-thirds of callers with less than grade 5 succeeded in enrolling, perhaps owing to the greater likelihood of a program "fit" for this group.

In communities of 500,000 or more, more than two-thirds of callers did not enrol (Figure 16). This is a considerably larger proportion than for smaller communities, where at least half of potential learners eventually enrolled in a literacy program.

More than two-thirds of callers employed part-time did not enrol (Figure 17). Potential learners in households with the lowest annual incomes were marginally more likely to enrol.

The next section covers some of the reasons why potential learners did not enrol in literacy or upgrading programs.

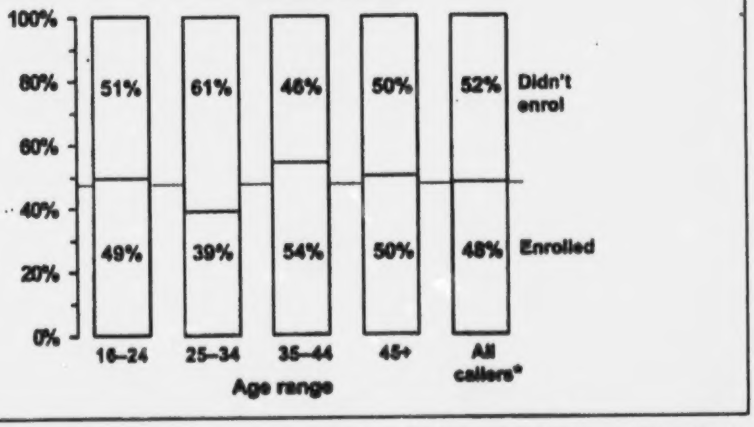
Factors associated with nonenrolment

There are many possible reasons why potential learners might contact but not enrol in a literacy or upgrading program. Indeed, most people we spoke with offered multiple reasons for their decision. In our survey, we asked callers about their reasons for deciding not to enrol in two stages:

- Through an open-ended question, we asked callers their **main** reason for deciding not to enrol. In this process, 25 distinct factors associated with nonenrolment emerged spontaneously.
- Through a series of yes/no questions, we asked callers their **contributing** reasons. Of the 18 contributing reasons that we probed, many overlapped with the 25 spontaneously emerging main reasons.

Figure 14

Enrolment, by age



* In this and several other graphs, the percentages in the "All callers" column differ slightly from the overall enrolment or dropout rates quoted elsewhere. This occurs because callers who did not provide the specific variable examined (in this case, the caller's age) were omitted from the calculations.

Figure 15

Enrolment, by level of formal education

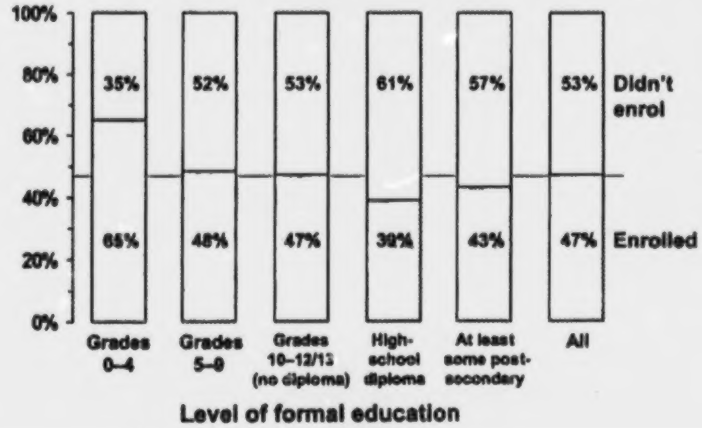
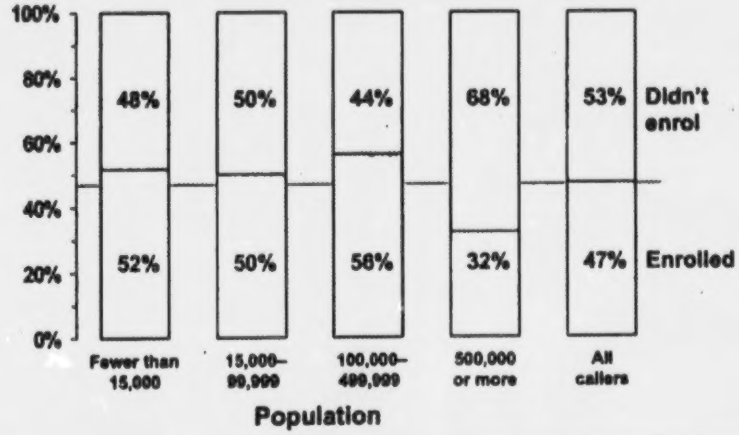


Figure 16

Enrolment, by community size



When the main and contributing reasons are considered together, we refer to them as the composite reasons. We later classified all of these reasons into one of these categories: program/policy-related (PPR), socioeconomic-circumstantial (SEC), cognitive-emotive (CE), or other reasons.

Of these broad categories, we found that PPR factors predominated as the *main* deterrent to enrolment for the largest percentage of callers (43 percent; Figure 18). After PPR reasons, SEC

Figure 17

Enrolment, by employment status

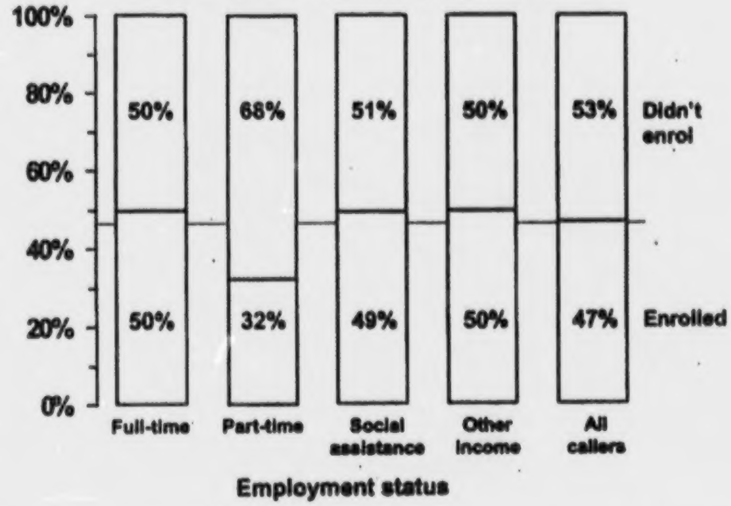
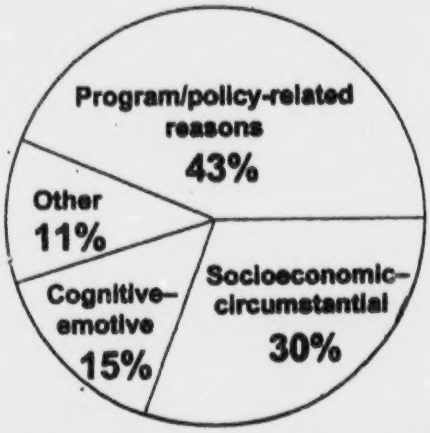


Figure 18

Main factors associated with not enrolling

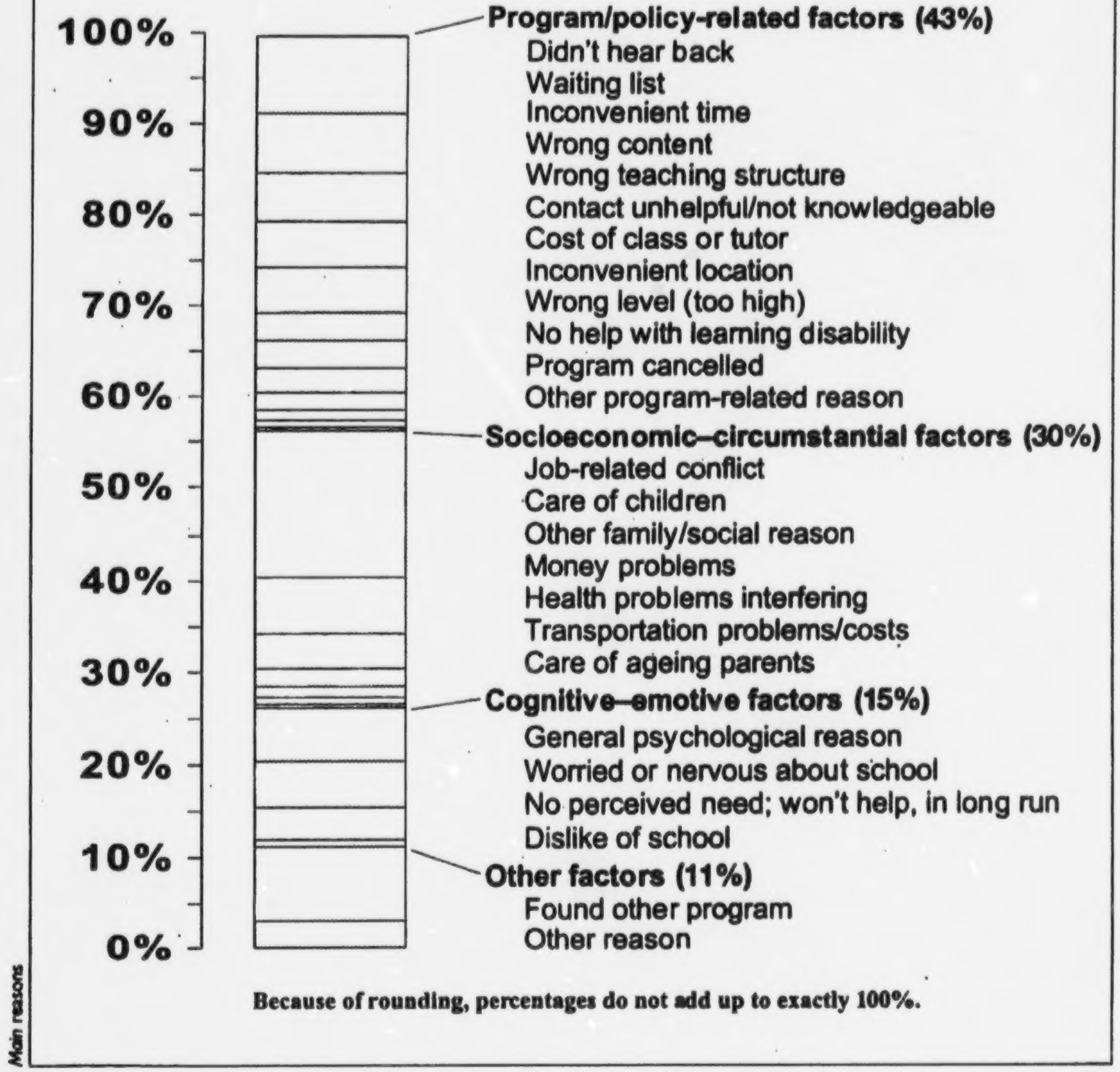


Because of rounding, percentages do not add up to exactly 100%.

This pie chart catergorizes callers' *main* reasons.

Figure 19

Overview of main reasons for not enrolling



Because of rounding, percentages do not add up to exactly 100%.

reasons were reported as the main factor by the next largest group of those who did not enrol (30 percent). CE reasons were the least likely (15 percent) to be cited as the *main* factor for not enrolling. The remaining 11 percent of those who did not enrol cited other reasons—mostly finding another program unrelated to the initial phone call (for example, a vocational training course).

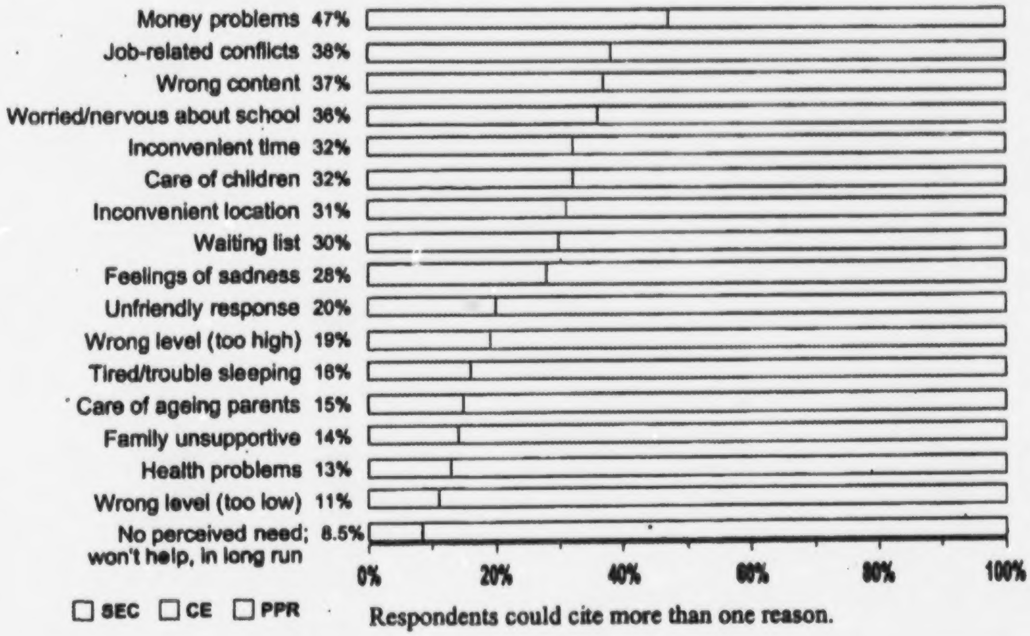
Regardless of category, the five main individual reasons cited most frequently (Figure 19 and Table 4) for not enrolling were:

1. Job-related reasons
2. Didn't hear back
3. Found other program
4. Waiting lists
5. Care of children

While it is useful to identify main reasons, they form only part of a complex picture. When main and contributing reasons are considered together in the *composite* result (Figure 20), all three categories become equally important, although certain factors stand out dramatically. Table 4, which gives a detailed overview of main reasons in rank order by type of factor, along with composite reasons, illustrates this.

Figure 20

Proportion citing particular reasons for not enrolling



Respondents could cite more than one reason.

This bar graph combines main and contributing factors into composite reasons.

Table 4

Reasons for not enrolling

Description	Reported by callers (%)	
	Main reason	*Composite reason*
Program/policy-related factors	**43**	
Didn't hear back	8.7	
Waiting list	6.2	30
Inconvenient times scheduled	5.6	32
Wrong content	5	37
Wrong teaching structure*	5	
Unhelpful/unknowledgeable contact	3.1	
Cost of class or tutor	3.1	
Inconvenient location	2.5	31
Unfriendly response	0	20
Wrong level (too high)	1.9	19
Wrong level (too low)	0	11
No help with learning disability	1.2	
Program cancelled	0.6	
Other program-related reason	0.6	
Socioeconomic–circumstantial factors	**30**	
Job-related conflicts	16.1	38
Care of children	6.2	32
Care of ageing parents	0.6	15
Family unsupportive	0	14
Other family/social reason	3.7	
Transportation problems	0.6	
Other cost problems, money worries	1.9	47
Health problems	1.2	13
Cognitive–emotive factors	**15**	
General psychological reasons	5.6	
Worried or nervous about school	5	36
Feelings of sadness	0	28
Tired/can't sleep	0	16
No perceived need/no help in the long run	3.7	8.5
Dislike of school	0.6	
Other factors	**11**	
Found other program	8.1	
Other reason	3.1	

* For example, where callers wanted a small-group setting but only large class settings existed, or wanted a class setting but only one-on-one tutoring was available.

Main reasons add up to 100% (except for 0.6 rounding error). Several contributing reasons were not specifically asked about (probed), and therefore are blank in that column.

I called a number and went through two or three different people. I got the run-around. I left messages, but no one called back. The woman said somebody would get back to me about where do I start in a program. I'm still waiting, since last February. It's discouraging. I gave up.

Man with grade 0–4, age 63.

I called the tutor several times, but she didn't return my call till I called her three times. Finally, she made an appointment and took my phone number. We still haven't met and she hasn't called back.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 29.

In addition to outlining the main, contributing and composite reasons, this section provides a fairly detailed demographic analysis. When reflecting on the demographic analysis for a given group, it is important to keep in mind the baseline enrolment rate for that group, summarized in Table 3.

Program/policy-related factors

The largest percentage (43 percent) of those who did not enrol identified PPR factors as their *main* reason. Figure 21 gives a detailed breakdown of PPR factors. Several factors were identified by many people; among composite PPR reasons, five factors were each cited by at least 30 percent of potential learners who did not enrol:

1. Wrong content
2. Inconvenient times
3. Inconvenient location
4. Waiting lists
5. Wrong level (too high or too low)

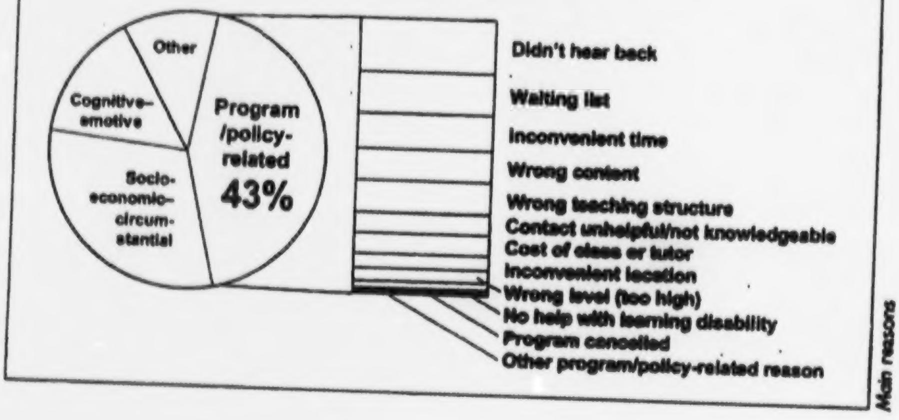
In addition, two in ten potential learners felt that contact with the program had been *unfriendly or unhelpful* and cited this as a contributing factor in their decision not to enrol.

Background characteristics in relation to PPR reasons

With a few notable exceptions, PPR barriers were cited as the main reason for nonenrolment by the largest percentage of callers in all demographic groups. However, there was a great deal of demographic variation in the specific type of PPR reason cited. For example, while men and women had somewhat similar rates of those citing PPR factors as their *main* reason for non–

Figure 21

Program/policy-related reasons for not enrolling



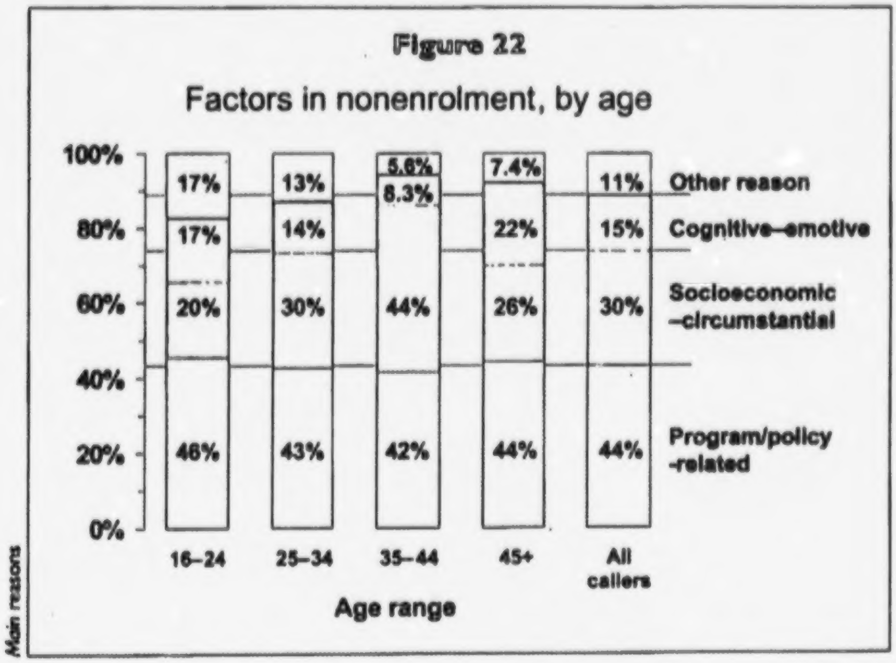


Figure 22

Factors in nonenrolment, by age

There was no formal credit given for the upgrading. It wouldn't help me get any credit for university entrance.

Woman with grade 5–9, age 25.

I was discouraged because I was told I could sign up for basic adult education, but I knew I would flunk math because I needed a tutor, not a class.

Woman with grade 5–9, age 23.

enrolment (47 percent versus 53 percent), there were dramatic gender differences among composite factors. Specifically, men were much more likely to identify "wrong program content" as a contributing factor in not enrolling (46 percent versus 27 percent), while women were more likely to cite "inconvenient location" (39 percent versus 21 percent).

As Figure 22 shows, similar proportions within each age group reported PPR reasons as the *main* reason for nonenrolment. PPR barriers were cited by the largest portion of those who did not enrol, in all but one of the age groups (35 to 44), for whom SEC factors were the most prevalent. Yet, when we look at specific composite factors, there are numerous variations by age. For example, callers older than age 45 were dramatically more likely than younger callers to say that contributing factors were wrong program type (54 percent versus 32 percent), wrong program level—too high (Figure 23), and unfriendly or unhelpful program contact (Figure 24). Inconvenient locations were particularly problematic for those between ages 25 and 34 (Figure 25).

When examined in relation to previous educational level (Figure 26), the proportion reporting PPR factors as their main barrier increased along with the level of previous education, from 36 percent of those with grade levels 0 to 9 to a clear majority (55 percent) of those with at least a high-school diploma. The composite data do not suggest any definitive patterns to account for this, although those with higher levels of formal education faced more difficulty finding programs at the right time of day (42 percent for those with at least a high-school diploma, versus 29 percent for those with no secondary-school diploma), which appears to be related to their greater likelihood of being employed. We may also speculate that those with higher levels of

What they were offering was going to be too advanced. I need earlier math, maybe grade 3 or 4.

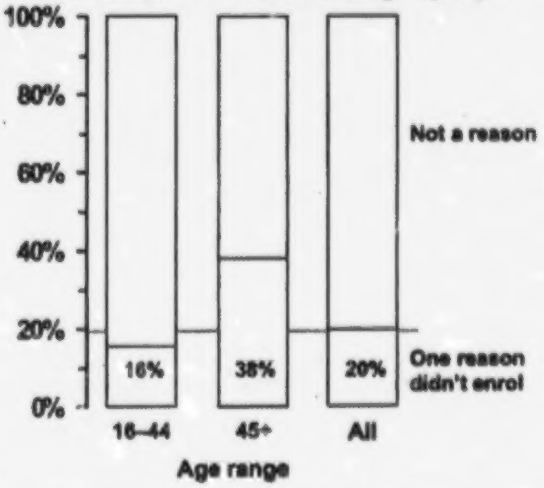
Man with grade 5–9, age 28.

One class was too far for me [to go]. And the other number I called, well, she didn't seem to have any compassion or understanding. She just said the class wasn't for me. She was moody because I had called her two or three times. It made me feel like I was disturbing her.

Woman with grade 5–9.

Figure 23

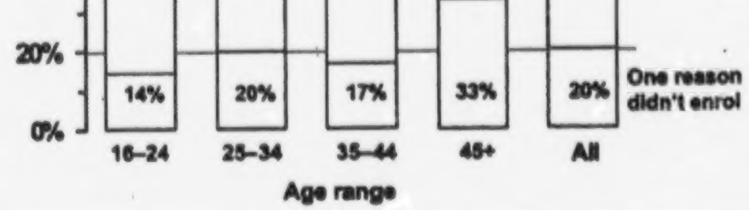
Wrong level (too high) as a reason for not enrolling, by age



Composite factor

Figure 24

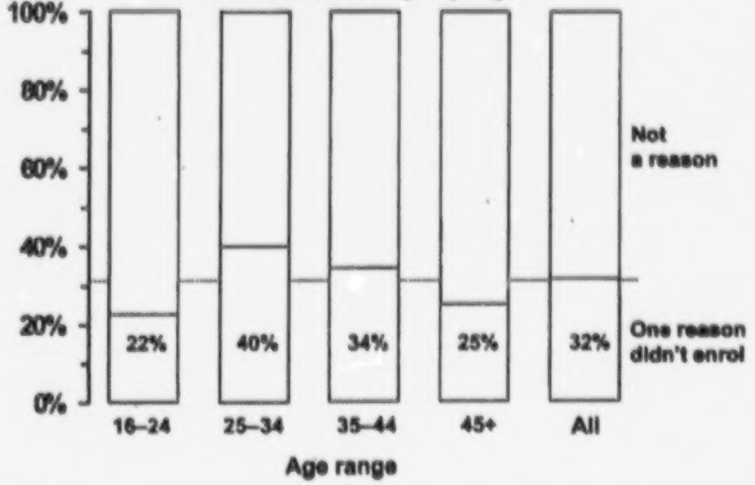
Unfriendly response as a reason for not enrolling, by age



Composite factor

Figure 25

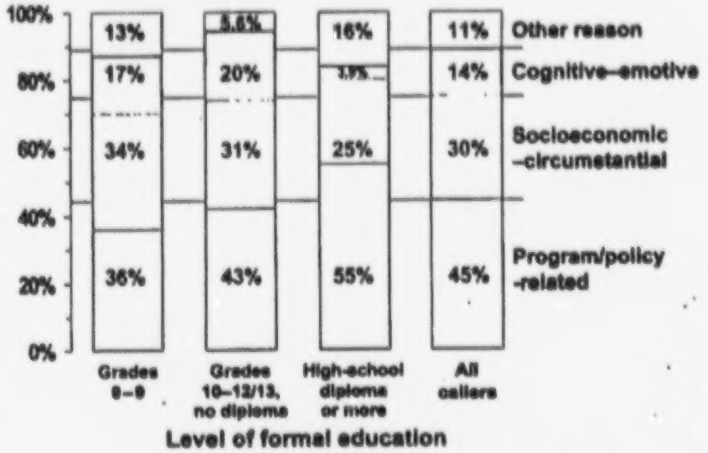
Inconvenient location as a reason for not enrolling, by age



Composite factor

Figure 26

Factors in nonenrolment, by level of formal education



Main reasons

The person that I spoke to told me that the classes were way downtown and that people who lived far away didn't show up when they said they would show up, and so I should get something closer to me.

She gave me a number which was the same number I had before, but they were full up.

Woman with grade 10–12, age 31.

There wasn't an institution to go to, just the library. It didn't seem formal enough or at a high-enough level.

Woman with some post-secondary schooling, age 39.

I have tried everything, but I haven't had any luck. I was worried they would mix me in with all kinds of people, but I need help with dyslexia.

Man with grade 0–4, age 36.

There was nothing close by me. I couldn't commute every day for four hours.

Woman with grade 10–12, age 29.

formal education may be less likely to find the best overall "fit" with literacy or upgrading programs. Indeed, callers with higher levels of formal education were the most likely to have located other types of programs (mostly vocational training) unrelated to the initial phone call.

Although those with lower levels of formal education were less likely than others to cite PPR reasons as their *main* reason for nonenrolment, there were some striking differences among composite factors. For example, those with grade 9 or less had particular difficulties with long wait times (38 percent versus 28 percent for those with at least some secondary schooling), wrong program type (46 percent versus 34 percent), level too high (30 percent versus 14 percent), and inconvenient program location (35 percent versus 30 percent).

Those with their greatest fluency in a language other than English were as likely as those most fluent in English to cite PPR reasons as their main and contributing reasons for nonenrolment. However, the former group were more likely to cite wrong program type as a factor in nonenrolment. They were also more likely to have found other programs unrelated to the initial phone call.

Potential learners living in communities with populations of fewer than 100,000 were more likely to state PPR reasons than those in larger communities (Figure 27); this was particularly striking in communities of 15,000–99,999 people, where a majority (53 percent) cited PPR. In these communities, dramatically larger percentages of callers cited inconvenient program location (40 percent) and waiting lists (58 percent, Figure 28) among their composite reasons for not enrolling than callers in smaller or larger communities. In contrast, callers in cities of 500,000 or more were twice as likely to cite inconvenient program times (Figure 29).

Figure 27

Factors in nonenrolment, by community size

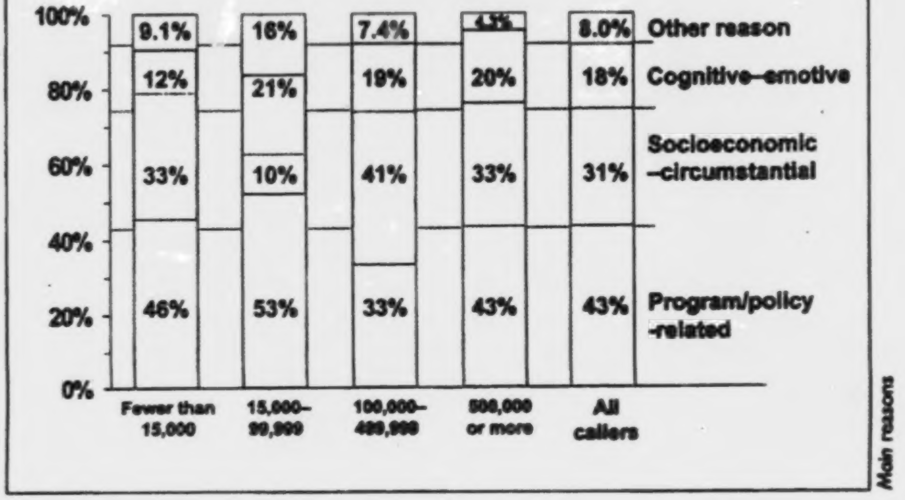
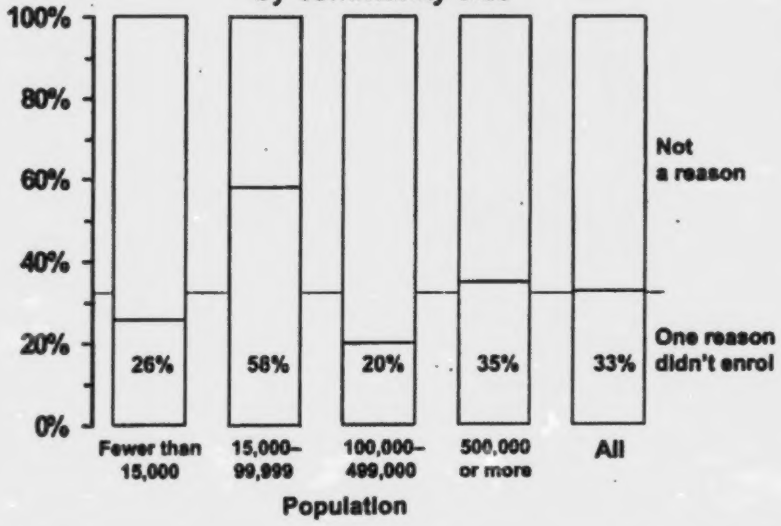


Figure 28

Waiting lists as a reason for not enrolling, by community size



Composite factor

They told me they were booked up and there was a long waiting list. Because of the cutbacks [to education], I didn't think there would be a place for me so I didn't make a second call.

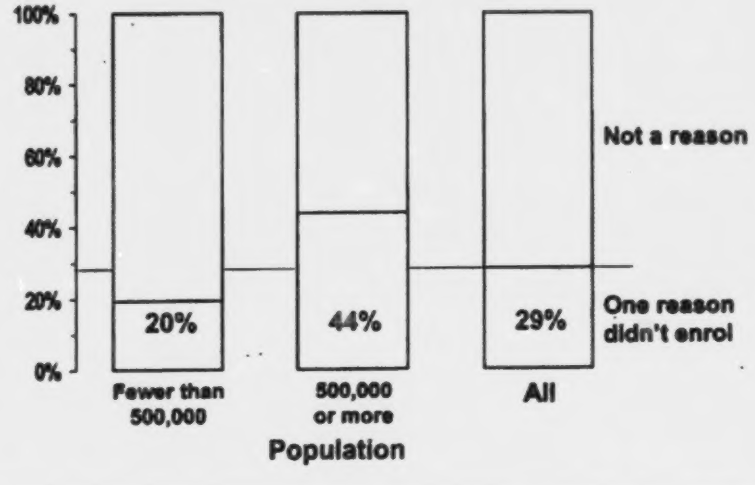
Man with grade 10–12, age 27.

They wouldn't let me take classes during the day because of my age, but it's the only way for me to continue my education. I work at night.

Man with grade 10–12, age 31.

Figure 29

Inconvenient times as a reason for not enrolling, by community size



Composite factor

It didn't fit into my time schedule. I have two disabled children and they only offered courses in the morning or late in the evening—and I needed something between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 35.

I had a problem with cost. It was too expensive, and the scheduling was not convenient. I could not work around that.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 19.

They didn't offer a program that was free and they wanted my tax return, which was not filled out yet. Also, they told me that I had to write a test first.

Man with grade 5–9, age 38.

In looking at **employment status**, we found that those who were employed at the time of the survey were more likely to identify PPR factors as the main reason for not enrolling (49 percent) than those receiving social assistance or "other" income (38 percent). One-third of social assistance recipients who did not enrol cited unfriendly and unhelpful program contact as a factor in nonenrolment.

We found no linear pattern by level of annual **household income**: Similar percentages of callers with incomes of less than $20,000 or more than $40,000 were likely to identify PPR factors as their most important reason for not enrolling. And yet, seven in ten of those with incomes between $30,000 and $40,000 also did so. Inconvenient program location was identified by twice as many callers with household incomes of less than $20,000 as it was by those with incomes of more than $40,000 (38 percent and 18 percent, respectively).

Those whose **original goal** for calling (see Figure 6) was specific employability skills were more likely to cite PPR reasons as the main reason for nonenrolment (55 percent versus 43 percent), as were those whose initial goal was for math alone or math along with reading and writing (57 percent versus 43 percent). For the group looking for help with math skills, nonenrolment was more likely to be associated with wrong program type and level (too high) and waiting lists. Those who were seeking general reading and writing (alone or with math) were particularly likely to cite inconvenient program times (42 percent versus 23 percent).

Looking at both the main and contributing reasons for nonenrolment in relation to callers' **motivations** (see Figure 8) for seeking a particular program revealed some interesting patterns. On the surface, it appears that PPR reasons for nonenrolment are cited by equal proportions (44 percent) of those with intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. However, when we break down these motivations into their component parts, there are marked differences in the proportions of callers who cited PPR nonenrolment reasons in relation to jobs (42 percent), retraining (47 percent), family/social/daily living skills (50 percent), personal well-being (52 percent) and general educational improvement (36 percent). In looking at contributing reasons, we see that wrong program type was a factor for more than half (54 percent) of those whose initial motivations were to improve skills for purposes related to family, social life, daily living skills, or personal well-being, compared with 40 percent of those whose goals related to jobs or retraining. Program location was also particularly problematic for those with motivations related to family/social/daily living skills (62 percent versus 27 percent of other groups), as well as long wait time (53 percent versus 28 percent). Inconvenient program time was cited by 62 percent of those whose initial main motivation was general educational improvement, compared with 32 percent overall.

Socioeconomic–circumstantial factors

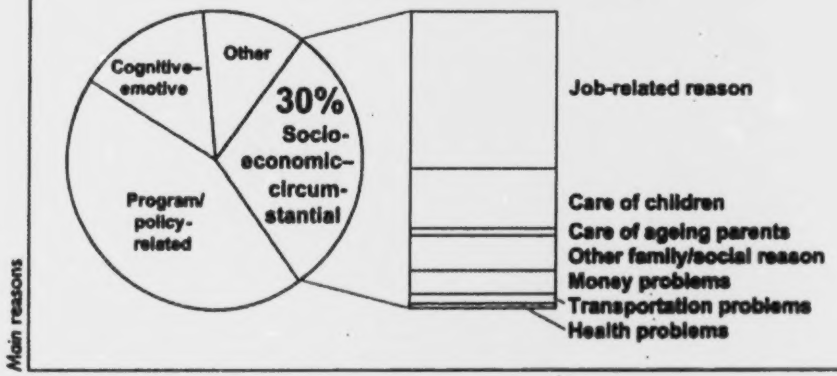
Of those citing SEC reasons as their *main* barrier to enrolment (30 percent), most related to work, as shown in Figure 30 and Table 4. In order of rank, the main reasons included:

1. Work-related conflicts
2. Childcare and other family or social responsibilities
3. Money worries
4. Health problems
5. Transportation problems

In addition to the main reasons that are SEC, callers readily identified many *contributing* reasons that fall within the SEC category. Combining main and contributing reasons reveals that

Figure 30

Socioeconomic–circumstantial reasons for not enrolling



I didn't know how to fit it in. It's just the nature of my job. It doesn't follow a definite schedule. I can be asked at short notice to work extra time.

Woman with grade 0–4, age 41.

It's hard for me to take a class because I'm away from home two weeks of the month every month because of my job.

Woman with grade 10–12, age 38.

problems with ***money*** was the most common factor in nonenrolment (Figure 20). Indeed, this was the most prevalent of ***any*** specific composite factor mentioned. After concerns about money, two other SEC composite reasons were each cited by at least 30 percent of those who didn't enrol:

- Job-related conflicts
- Care of children .

Unfortunately, our measure of job-related reasons does not allow us to distinguish among a broad range of complex work factors like hours of work (including shift work), number of hours worked per day, unpredictable work hours, seasonal work and so forth. Also, we are unable to distinguish job-related reasons for nonenrolment from the inconvenient program time item among the program-related reasons. So, for example, in a community offering only daytime programs, one caller who works during the day may have cited hours of work as the (SEC) barrier to nonenrolment, while another with the same work hours may have said "inconvenient program times" (a PPR reason). These two factors should be considered together because of the high degree of interrelationship we can reasonably expect.

One clue that we have about the nature of work conflicts is that more than half (57 percent) of those who identified work-related reasons for nonenrolment were not working full-time. So, while the total number of hours may have been a factor for some who identified job-related reasons, for most it is likely that the times were not convenient. This suggests that the barrier identified was more often one of "fit" between employment and the program, rather than the number of hours worked *per se*.

Background characteristics in relation to SEC factors

Overall, women were much more likely to cite SEC factors than men (61 percent versus 39 percent), which reflects women's lower incomes and higher degree of responsibility for childcare. Among SEC factors, as might be expected, care of children was cited twice as often by women than by men

(42 percent versus 19 percent). Somewhat surprisingly, women were only slightly more likely to report unsupportive family members (15 percent versus 12 percent) as a factor in nonenrolment.

Differences by annual **household income** were also pronounced: 45 percent of those from households with incomes below $30,000 said childcare conflicts contributed, compared to just 13 percent of those with more than $30,000. Unsurprisingly, those with lower household incomes were far more likely to cite worrying about money as a reason for nonenrolment. For example, 62 percent of those below $20,000 cited this as a factor, compared with just 28 percent with incomes of more than $40,000. Sixty percent of those receiving social assistance identified financial concerns as a contributing factor, compared with 42 percent of those with full- or part-time work.

As mentioned earlier, in all but one of the **age** groups, PPR barriers were cited as main reasons by the largest portion of those who did not enrol. The exception to this pattern was for those between the ages of 35 and 44, where SEC reasons were cited more frequently (Figure 22). In fact, for this age group, SEC factors were more than twice as likely to be suggested as a main factor than for those between the ages of 16 and 24 (44 percent versus 20 percent). Particularly problematic for those between 25 and 34 was the interrelated issues of job, childcare (Figure 31) and location (Figure 25). Those older than age 45 were the most likely to cite health problems (44 percent) as one of their composite reasons. Worrying about money was the only contributing SEC factor that was just as burdensome to the youngest callers (18 to 24) as those in other age groups.

I can't just pick up and go; I have [farm] animals.

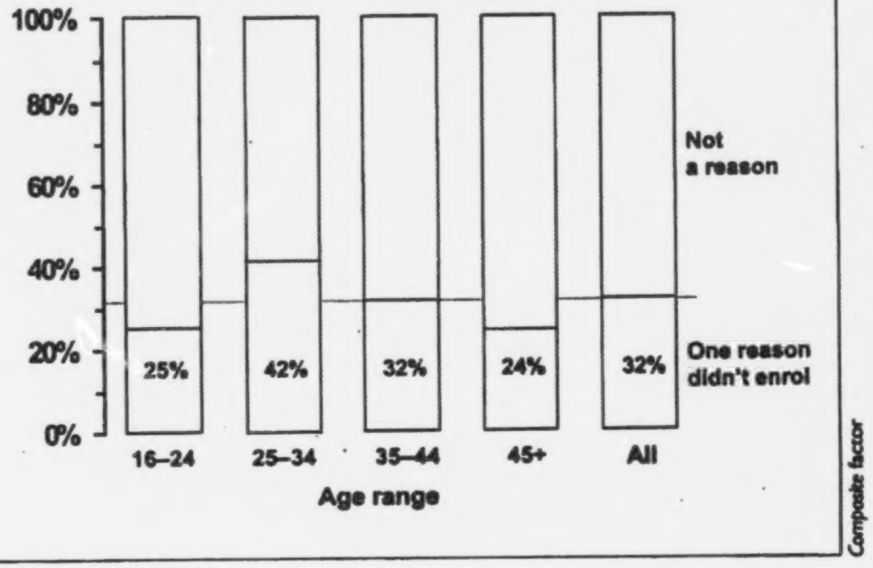
Woman with grade 10–12, age 29.

I was working a lot of hours and was exhausted when I came home from work. Then I'd have to take care of things at home. I have two little kids. I couldn't really afford babysitting. Maybe if they could provide childcare.

Woman with grade 0–4, age 45.

Figure 31

Childcare conflicts as a reason for not enrolling, by age



Those with higher levels of **formal education** were the least likely to cite SEC factors—not surprising, given the higher levels of income associated with having more formal education. **Language** of greatest fluency showed no effect upon the percentages of those citing SEC factors in nonenrolment; however, as a composite factor, childcare conflicts were less frequently a problem for those who were more fluent in languages other than English, regardless of income level.

The proportion of callers living in communities with **populations** between 15,000 and 99,999 inhabitants who stated SEC reasons as a *main* factor for nonenrolment was dramatically lower (10 percent) than among those living in smaller communities or in towns or cities of 10,000 or more (more than a third). This peculiar pattern held, regardless of gender or age. And yet, when we look at contributing reasons, the pattern does not hold; callers in these communities were just as likely to cite various SEC factors. It could be that because program-related problems are so prevalent in these communities, it overshadows the picture at the first mention.

Ironically, regardless of **employment status**, callers were just as likely to offer SEC factors as their *main* reason for nonenrolment; neither was there any obvious pattern by level of household income. With the exception of worrying about money, this pattern (or lack of one) held for composite reasons as well.

As for specific **goals** for calling, those seeking numeracy skills (alone or along with reading and writing) were more likely to cite childcare conflicts (43 percent versus 32 percent for other groups) and money worries (67 percent versus 47 percent). Those seeking numeracy skills were among the most highly employment- and income-disadvantaged callers in this study: For example, 67 percent had incomes below $20,000 (compared with 38 percent of other groups) and 46 percent were on social assistance (compared with 24 percent).

Callers who cited general educational improvement as their main **motivation** were the most likely to state one of the SEC factors as their main reason for nonenrolment (39 percent, versus 27 percent of other groups). Their concerns were spread over a range of reasons, rather than being concentrated on a few (although childcare and money concerns were somewhat above average). Callers primarily motivated by wanting to increase a sense of personal well-being were dramatically more likely than other groups (30 percent versus 11 percent) to cite an unsupportive spouse or family members as a reason for not enrolling. Most of this group consisted of women.

I had transportation problems. I had to walk because of financial problems. I didn't really have enough money to enrol, anyway.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 43.

Cognitive–emotive factors

Fifteen percent of potential learners who did not enrol cited CE factors as their *main* reason (Figure 32). In order of rank, these factors included:

1. General pychological reasons, such as depression or personal anxiety unrelated to taking a program
2. Fear or anxiety related to taking a program
3. No perceived need, or feeling that the program would not help in the long run
4. Dislike of schooling

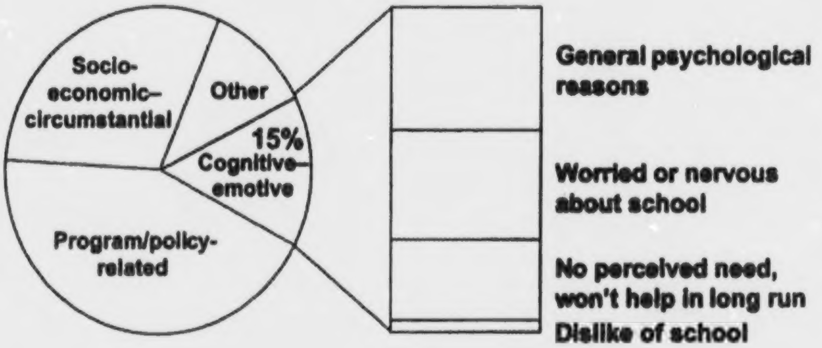
While it was a relatively small minority who cited CE factors as their main reason for nonenrolment, more than a third of those who did not enrol reported feelings of worry or nervousness about taking a program as a contributing factor (Figure 20). Close to three in ten

The grade level was low enough for me to follow, but they said I had to go and buy the books myself. I was too embarrassed to go myself because they were elementary level. If they offered to get them for me, it would be different story.

Man with grade 5–9, age 28.

Figure 32

Cognitive–emotive reasons for not enrolling



people who did not enrol also cited feelings of sadness as having affected their decision not to enrol, and a further 16 percent cited tiredness or inability to sleep properly.

Background characteristics in relation to CE factors

Men and women were equally likely to cite cognitive–emotive factors as main and contributing reasons for nonenrolment, with the exception that women were somewhat more likely than men to report "feelings of sadness" (31 percent versus 23 percent, respectively).

Those between the ages of 35 and 44 were the least likely to identify CE reasons as their main factor in nonenrolment; such factors were identified half as often as for other groups. SEC factors appear to overshadow others for this age group when it comes to main reasons; nevertheless, CE factors were cited as *contributing* factors with equal frequency. Younger callers were the least likely to cite CE issues as contributing factors; older callers were dramatically more likely to cite CE reasons for nonenrolment. For example, compared with other age groups, those older than 45 years were more likely to cite worry or nervousness about being in a program as a factor (Figure 33). Older callers were much more likely to have lower levels of formal education, and to cite negative early school experiences; both of these are strongly related to mixed or negative feelings about being in a program. Those older than age 45 were also much more likely to acknowledge feelings of sadness as a factor in nonenrolment (69 percent versus 16 percent). Callers more than 55 years old were particularly challenged, with 86 percent of those who did not enrol citing feelings of sadness as a factor. This highlights the need for specialized approaches in working with potential learners who are older.

As stated, those with higher levels of **formal education** were considerably less likely to offer CE reasons for not enrolling than those with less education. For example, feeling worried or nervous about being in a program was identified as a factor by 56 percent of those with less than grade 9, 36 percent of those with some high school, and just 18 percent of those with at least a high-school diploma (Figure 34). The relationship to grade level of those citing "feelings of sadness" was also very pronounced: 50 percent of those with less than grade 9, 22 percent of those with some high school, and 11 percent of those with at least a diploma. Those whose greatest fluency was in a **language** other than English were dramatically less likely to be struggling with worry or nervousness (14 percent versus 42 percent), owing largely to their greater levels of formal education, and thus their greater likelihood to have had positive early school experiences.

I thought I was too old for school.

Woman with high-school diploma, age 31.

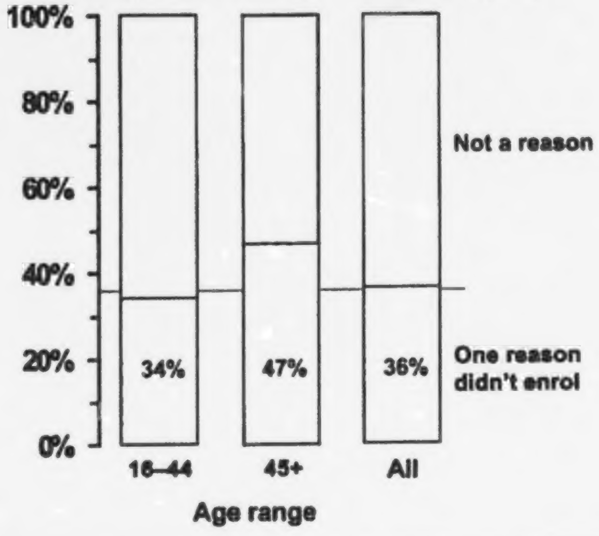
I was afraid that I would have been made fun of.

Man with grade 5–9, age 48.

In relation to **community size**, a smaller proportion of potential learners in the smallest communities (fewer than 15,000) offered CE factors as their main reason for not enrolling (12 percent versus 18 percent), perhaps speaking to the greater degree of social cohesion in smaller communities. The pattern holds for composite reasons. For some factors, the difference is particularly striking; for example, feelings of sadness are reported by 52 percent of those in large cities, compared with only 16 percent in smaller centres. Interestingly, callers in the smallest communities were the least likely to report negative early school experiences (36 percent versus 57 percent in other communities), regardless of the grade level they had achieved, accounting for the lower degree of worry or nervousness being cited as a reason for nonenrolment in small or rural

Figure 33

Worry or nervousness about school as a reason for not enrolling, by age



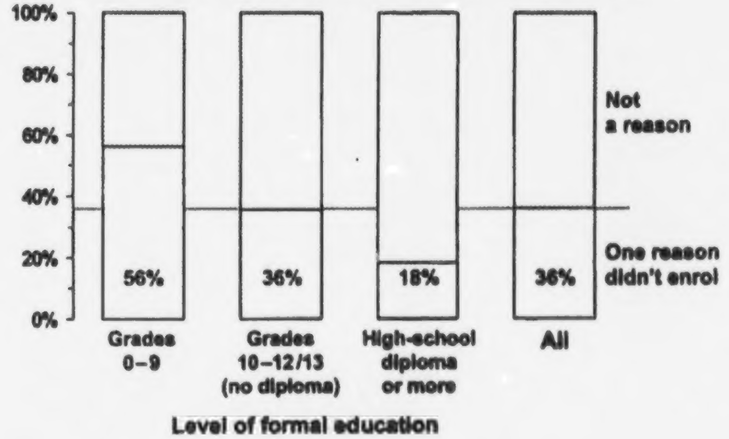
Composite factor

I did not want to go. It would be like starting grade 1 again and the teacher was not satisfied with my tests or me. I would feel out of place and confused.

Woman grade 5–9, age 63.

Figure 34

Worry or nervousness about school as a reason for not enrolling, by level of formal education



Composite factor

communities (24 percent versus 46 percent in other communities). However, the trend in these areas is still for older callers to cite more negative early school experiences; it is just less pronounced compared with those of similar age in larger cities.

While those not employed were somewhat more likely to offer CE as their main reason for nonenrolment, no patterns were evident by **employment status** or level of **household income** by composite CE factors.

Callers with intrinsic **motivations** were somewhat more likely than those with extrinsic motivations to offer CE factors as main reasons for nonenrolment (18 percent and 12 percent, respectively). Those seeking reading and writing, alone or with numeracy, were more likely to say that they did not enrol partly due to worry or nervousness about being in a program (41 percent versus 25 percent of other groups). This is related to the lower levels of formal education among those seeking the particular skills of literacy and numeracy, compared to those seeking specific credentials.

Summary

In this section we have seen that while enrolment rates among all groups give us reason for pause, rates for some groups were particularly low. Specifically, potential learners who were least likely to enrol included those:

- In the 25–34 age group
- With at least a high-school diploma
- Working part-time
- Living in cities of more than 500,000 people

Overall, program/policy-related reasons were the *main* factors driving nonenrolment for the largest percentage of callers (PPR, 43 percent), followed by socioeconomic–circumstantial reasons (SEC, 30 percent) and, more distantly, by cognitive–emotive (CE, 15 percent) and "other" factors (11 percent). While identifying main factors is important, in the end, composite reasons offer a more sophisticated picture of the multiple, interacting factors involved in nonenrolment. This study illustrates that factors affecting nonenrolment cluster equally around the three sites (PPR, SEC, and CE) that influence patterns of participation. In looking at the whole picture, we can more readily see the need for multifaceted solutions that can encompass a multiplicity of factors.

E. Dropping out of programs

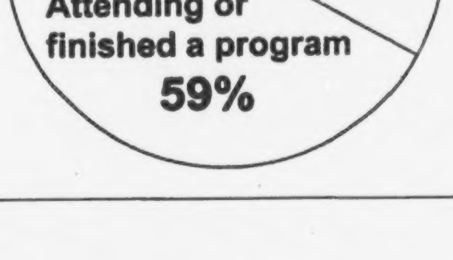
In addition to providing a broad examination of the overall dropout patterns of those surveyed, this section includes an in-depth examination of some of the primary reasons why learners left programs in relation to the background factors listed in section A of this chapter. Understanding the ways in which various factors operate for different demographic groups can lead to more specialized strategies to increase retention of learners in programs.

Dropout rates

Of those who enrolled, the majority (59 percent) were "still attending" (which, in our analysis, includes those who had already completed their program) when recontacted, while one-third (33 percent) had left a literacy program and 8 percent were still waiting to begin (Figure 35). Background characteristics or demographics play a complex and important role in whether or not people enrol and continue in literacy programs.

Figure 35

Dropout rate



For example, while **women** were somewhat more likely to call than **men** (53 percent versus 47 percent) and slightly less likely to enrol (women ended up constituting 50 percent of all those who signed up), they were clearly more likely to continue attending programs than men: The proportion of female learners retained by programs increased to 56 percent. Men were therefore significantly more likely to have dropped out than women (39 percent versus 23 percent; see Figure 36).

Through the lens of **age**, a more striking pattern can be seen among those who drop out of programs. There was a strong inverse relationship between age and dropout rates—the lower the age, the higher the dropout rate (Figure 37). For example, while 42 percent of those in the youngest group (16 to 24) dropped out, only 17 percent of those in the oldest group (45 and older) did so.

There are no clear dropout patterns in relation to level of **education** (Figure 38), except that callers with less than grade 5 had particularly high rates of retention (80 percent), which could speak to the appropriateness of the content and level of the programs offered. Those with some postsecondary education (primarily ESL callers) also had particularly high rates of retention (81 percent).

Size of community had striking effects on rates of retention, with continuing attendance being lowest for learners in both the largest (more than 500,000) and the smallest (fewer than 15,000) communities (Figure 39). While callers living in the smallest communities were more likely to *enrol*, they were also the most likely to drop out (41 percent). Thirty-eight percent of those living in large cities dropped out, compared with 20 percent in towns (15,000 to 99,999) and 27 percent in smaller cities (100,000 to 499,999).

Figure 36

Dropout rate, by sex

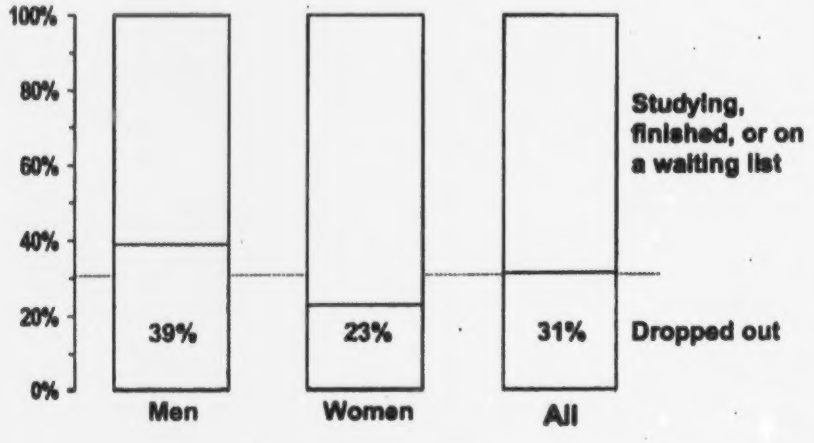


Figure 37

Dropout rate, by age

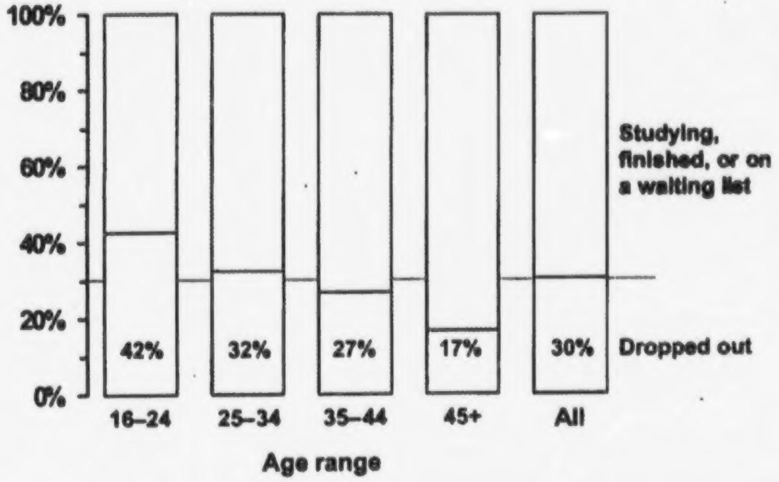


Figure 38

Dropout rate, by level of formal education

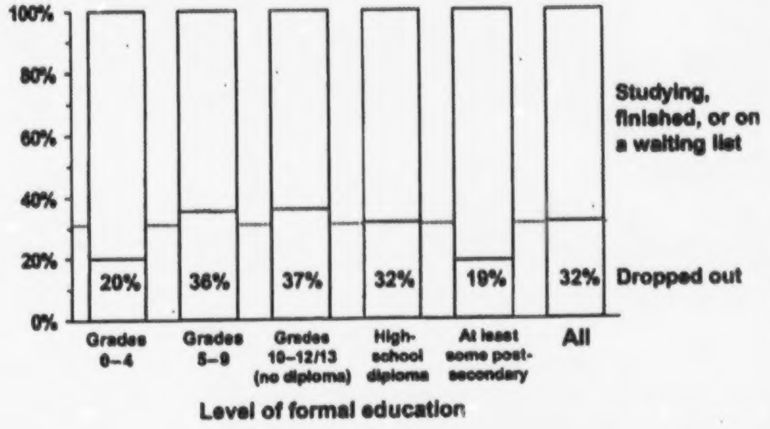
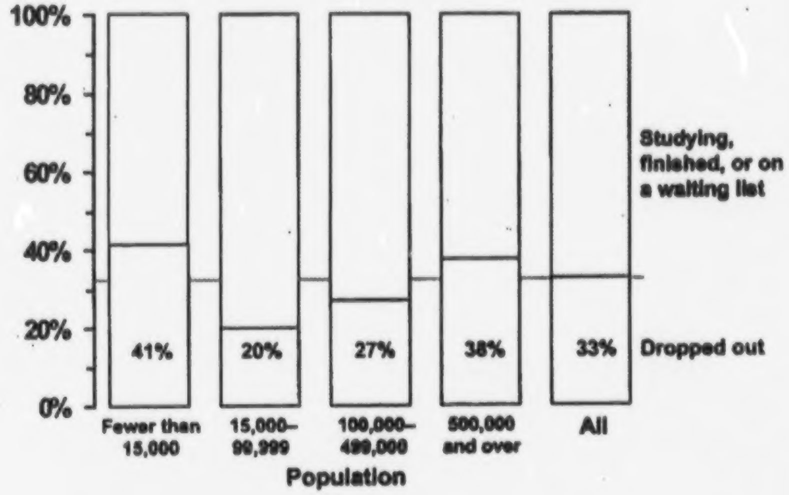


Figure 39

Dropout rate, by community size



Level of annual **household income** also had strong effects on dropout rates. Potential learners with the lowest incomes were a larger proportion of those who enrolled but a much larger proportion of those who dropped out. As might be expected, dropout rates decreased as household income increased. Nearly one-third of learners with household incomes below $20,000 left their programs, compared with about one-quarter of those with household incomes between $20,000 and $40,000 and less than one-fifth of those with household incomes of more than $40,000.

Related to income is **employment status**, which showed small variations in dropout rates. Those who dropped out include 28 percent of those employed full-time, 35 percent of those employed part-time, 30 percent of those receiving social assistance, and 34 percent of those who indicated "other" income. Those employed part-time have the lowest likelihood of remaining in programs: Only about 20 percent of potential learners who were employed part-time were still involved at the time of the survey (a rate nearly 15 percent lower than for other callers).

Overall, those with intrinsic **motivations** were marginally more likely to remain in programs compared with those who had extrinsic motivations; however, within the intrinsic category, there is a striking variation: Among learners with intrinsic motivations, fully 45 percent of those with "general educational improvement" motivations left their programs, compared to just 15 percent of learners who said their main motivation was to address "daily/social/family" needs.

With these findings in mind, we move to look in more depth at the complex and multidimensional factors behind high dropout rates.

Factors associated with dropping out

While nonenrolment was primarily affected by PPR factors, we found that SEC factors were the *main* issue for most of those who dropped out of programs. More than half (56 percent) of all those who left programs cited SEC factors as the main reason for dropping out, compared with 27 percent citing PPR factors; 6 percent, cognitive–emotive (CE) factors; and the remaining 10 percent, other factors (Figure 40). "Other" factors included going to skills training, not meeting time or attendance requirements, and the literacy activity not being allowed by Employment Insurance. An overview of the specific reasons within these broad categories is found in Figure 41.

Four factors, three of which are SEC and the other is CE, were offered as composite reasons by at least one-quarter of those who dropped out of programs (Figure 42):

- Job-related conflicts
- Money problems
- Child care
- Worry or nervousness about being in a program

We turn now to a closer look at the factors that affect dropping out and their associated demographic dimensions.*

> ***I never knew about the hours I had to work. It was inconvenient and stressful.... If I had another source of income, then I could go to school.***
>
> Woman with grade 5–9, age 22.

> ***It was going okay, but I got called back to work. It got quite hard because I had no energy in the evenings. But the main problem was [that] my job hours started conflicting with the program.***
>
> Man with high-school diploma, age 36.

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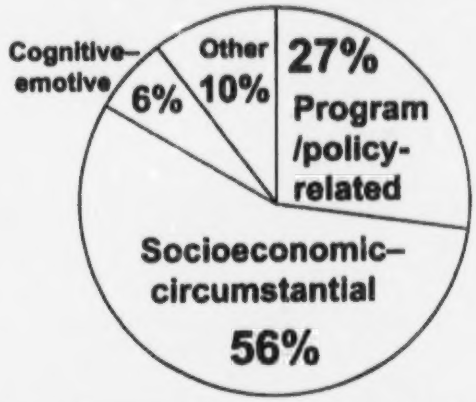
* Unlike previous sections on enrolment and nonenrolment, demographic analysis in this section is more limited because of the smaller sample size for those who dropped out.

Figure 40

Main factors associated with dropping out



Because of rounding, percentages do not add up to exactly 100%.

Main reasons

I got a new job at a casino and we have day and night shifts. Maybe I can do it another time, but right now is too hard.

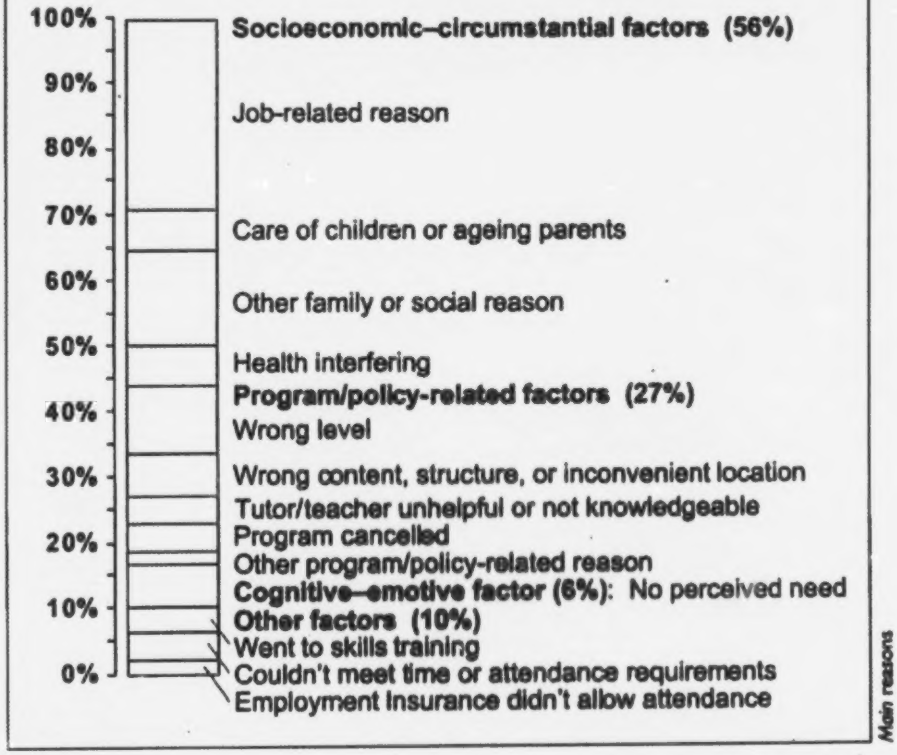
Man with high-school diploma, age 31.

My little guy was getting beat up at daycare. My kids had to be the priority. I was pretty tired at the time. I've got three little kids.

Woman with grade 10–12, age 31.

Figure 41

Overview of main reasons for dropping out



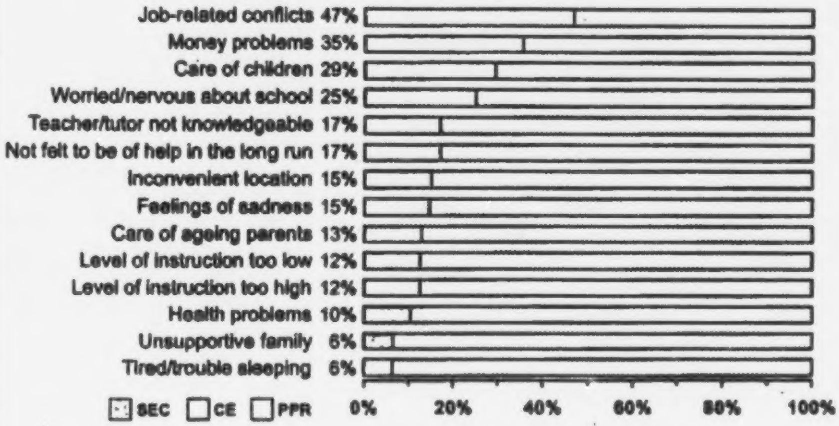
Socioeconomic–circumstantial factors

Of all those who left programs, more than one-third reported money worries as one of their composite reasons (Figure 42). This reason was exceeded by yet another SEC factor: Nearly half (47 percent) identified job-related reasons as contributing to their decision—mostly because of scheduling conflicts and difficulty fitting their literacy activities in with their work responsibilities. Program location (mentioned by 15 percent of those who dropped out) may be a related factor, in that the time required to travel to the program site may contribute to scheduling conflicts.

Among those who dropped out for SEC reasons, a majority said that a job-related concern was the main problem (Figure 43). Another quarter cited family or social reasons as the main factor in dropping out. Caring for others is a considerable demand on the time and energy of learners. One in three said that care of children was the *principal* reason behind why they dropped out of a program. More than one in ten cited care of ageing parents as the main reason for their decision to leave. One in ten learners who dropped out reported that their own health made it necessary to leave the program.

Figure 42

Proportion citing particular reasons for dropping out (composite reasons)

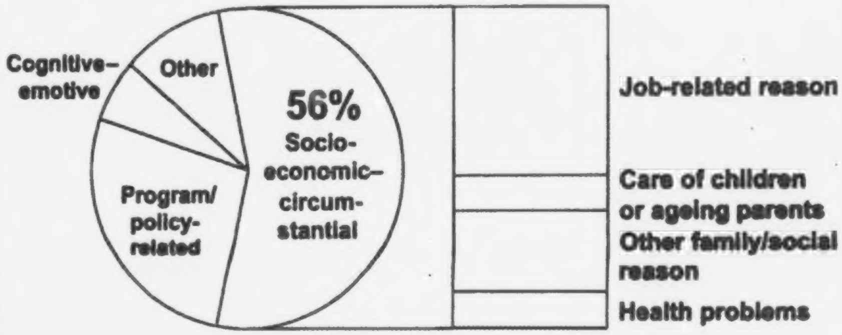


Respondents could cite more than one reason.

Composite factors

Figure 43

Socioeconomic–circumstantial reasons for dropping out



Main reasons

My mother got cancer and I had to take care of her. [The class] was quite a distance from my house but I liked it at the time.

Man with grade 5–9, age 19.

I started, but then I had a funding problem. I was on Unemployment Insurance and they said it was not feasible for them to put me through the six-month course for high-school upgrading.

Woman with grade 10–12, age 27.

It was a college-entry program, and what I was looking for was a basic level [program]. I don't think they have anything for me.

Man, grade 0–4, age 43.

I was always being evaluated. I think that turned me off. It could have been done in a softer way.

Man, grade 5–9, age 43.

Background characteristics in relation to SEC factors

Women and learners in smaller communities were considerably more likely to cite an SEC factor as their main reason for dropping out (see Figures 44 and 45, respectively).

Those who were employed full-time were more likely than others to offer an SEC factor as their main reason for leaving. As would be expected, job-related concerns were contributing factors for fully eight in ten of those employed full-time, but only half those working part-time and three in ten of those with other avenues of income.

As well, job-related factors contributed to dropping out for a far larger proportion of those with at least a high-school diploma compared with those having less formal education. Fully two-thirds of those with at least some postsecondary education cited the need to care for others as a contributing factor in dropping out.

Those with lower household incomes were twice as likely as those with higher incomes to say that worrying about money was a factor contributing to their decision to leave. More than half of those in the smallest communities said money worries contributed to their decision to leave a program.

Program/policy-related factors

More than one-third of those with PPR main reasons for dropping out said that the program was taught at the wrong level (about equal proportions said that the level of instruction was too high or too low), while more than one-quarter cited wrong content, structure or location (Figure 46). Of the remainder, about half reported that the program had been cancelled, or else felt that teachers or tutors were not knowledgeable or were unhelpful. Attendance requirements were among the other barriers reported.

Background characteristics in relation to PPR factors

As mentioned earlier, six in ten of those who dropped out were men; men also made up more than three-quarters of those offering PPR factors as the main reason for leaving programs. Learners in large cities were considerably more likely to offer PPR reasons, as were those working part-time and social assistance recipients.

Cognitive–emotive and "other" reasons

Only 6 percent of those who dropped out said that CE factors were the main reason for dropping out; all these individuals said that they realized the program would not help or that they did not need it. Other CE factors that *contributed* to dropping out (Figure 42) among these and other former students were anxiety about being in a program (25 percent), feelings of sadness (15 percent) and tiredness or trouble sleeping (6 percent).

Background characteristics in relation to CE factors

Women were considerably more likely than men to say that anxieties about being in a program contributed to their decision to leave. Learners who left programs in cities of 100,000–499,999 were most likely to identify CE factors and also to offer "other" reasons. Those with less formal education were much more likely than those with more education to identify CE factors, as were those receiving social assistance and "other" income. Twice the proportion of learners with

Figure 44

Factors in dropping out, by sex

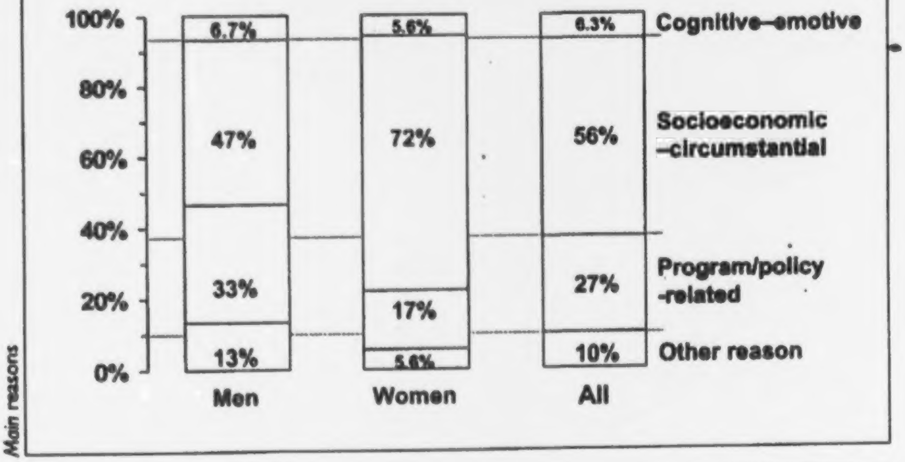
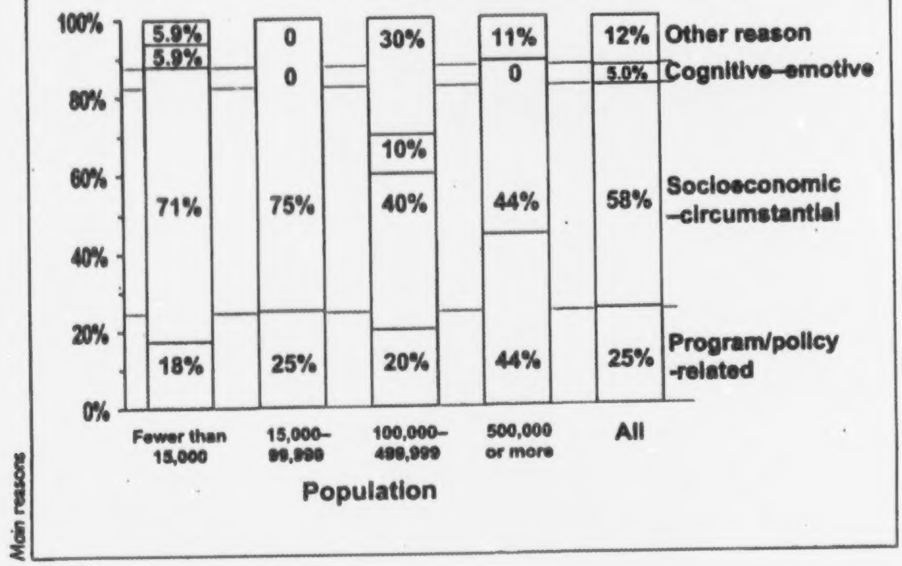


Figure 45

Factors in dropping out, by community size



It was an improper setting for me. There were too many people doing too many different things at different levels. There was only one teacher and lots of students, so she couldn't be everywhere at once. There was always so much conversation and it was a very small room. I found it difficult to concentrate. I was definitely discouraged.

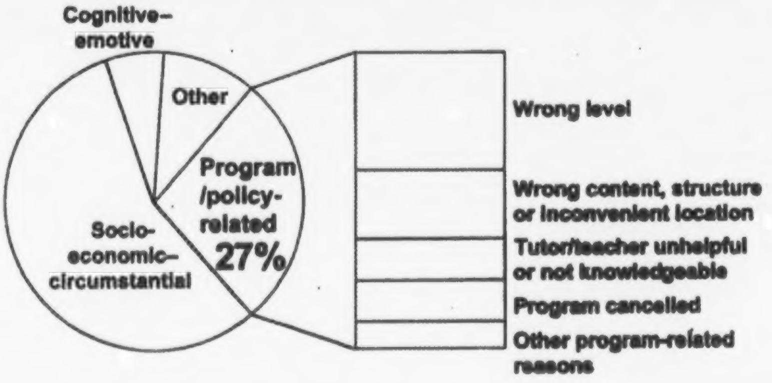
Man, some postsecondary schooling, age 38.

The tutor could not meet anymore the days that we arranged. I went through three different tutors.

Man with high-school diploma, age 29.

Figure 46

Program/policy-related reasons for dropping out



extrinsic goals said that their anxiety about being in a program contributed to their decision to leave as those with intrinsic motivations.

Summary

Thirty-three percent of those who signed up for programs had dropped out by the point of follow-up. Interestingly, more than three-quarters of those who dropped out said they would seek help again in the future, supporting the idea that people drop in and out of programs (sometimes called "stopping out") in relation to particular circumstances rather than dropping out altogether. This gives us clear incentive to find solutions to facilitate better retention for these learners and others whose life circumstances may be similar.

The main factor driving dropout rates in this study were socioeconomic–circumstantial (SEC) reasons, which were cited by 56 percent of those who left programs. Job-related conflicts and family responsibilities (especially child and elder care) and financial concerns made up a significant portion of these reasons. A further quarter of those who dropped out identified program/policy-related (PPR) factors as the main reason for leaving programs, with program level, content and structure being particularly problematic. A relatively low proportion of learners (6 percent) offered cognitive–emotive (CE) factors as their main reason for leaving a program, although worry or nervousness about being in a program was a contributing factor for more than a quarter of those who dropped out.

While the findings related to dropping out point to the need for multifaceted solutions that would address SEC, PPR and CE factors, the clear predominance of certain types of SEC factors highlights the need to find immediate solutions to the childcare, job-related and financial pressures experienced by literacy and upgrading learners.

F. Learners' experiences of programs

This section briefly outlines some of the experiences people had in programs—specifically, in the areas of wait times, program structure, level and fees. We also report on levels of satisfaction and people's ideas for future changes.

Wait time

The length of time callers had to wait to start a program varied widely. Most potential learners who enrolled were able to start within two weeks (59 percent) or a month (another 16 percent); but one-quarter had to wait more than a month, and some callers as long as three months, before they could start a program. Disturbingly, 8 percent of the people who signed up were still on waiting lists at the point of follow-up, which, as we noted earlier, was six to eight months after the initial call.

Structure and fees

Of those who signed up for programs, 45 percent reported studying one-on-one with a tutor, and 42 percent in a classroom with a teacher. Ten percent were enrolled in correspondence courses, and 3 percent were engaged in some other form of self-study. Close to 40 percent of those who enrolled had to pay some kind of fee for the class, the tutor (18 percent of all those who enrolled), or materials (21 percent).

Levels of satisfaction and ideas for change

Of those who had completed or were still in a program, the great majority (88 percent) reported positive experiences with programs. Specifically, people felt that the programs were at the right level for them and the content was what they had wanted; on the latter point, 79 percent of those in classroom settings were happy with the program content, and 95 percent of those with tutors.

A striking area of dissatisfaction was the hours per week spent with a teacher or tutor (Figure 47). While close to a third of those studying were in class or with tutors for one or two hours per week, only 12 percent said that this was ideal. In fact, a third of those who enrolled would like to be studying for more than 16 hours per week.

When asked to state one main thing they would change about the program, learners said:

- Nothing at all (42 percent)
- Smaller classes or more individual attention from the teacher or tutor (17 percent)
- More relevant material (13 percent)
- More knowledgeable teacher or tutor or a faster pace (9 percent)
- Better time or location (8 percent)

Factors affecting concentration

As Figure 48 illustrates, learners who were still in programs at the point of follow-up are plagued with many of the same issues associated with dropping out. Based on this information, it is fair to characterize the involvement of many program participants as precarious.

I wish I could do this full-time, so I could really learn what I need faster. Then I could really get on with my life.

Man with grade 10–12, age 26.

With the bills, food, clothing and rent, there isn't really a lot to spare. It's tough to pay for extra bus fare. If my mom wasn't around to watch the kids, it wouldn't be possible for me to be doing this. There's no way I could pay for babysitting too. If you don't have money, you always feel that you should be somewhere else than school, somewhere earning more money. That's a fact.

Woman with grade 5–9, age 33.

Figure 47

Provided vs. desired amount of program instruction

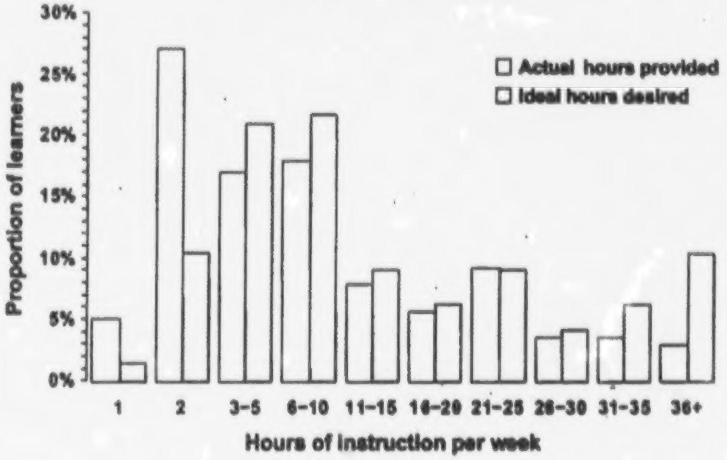
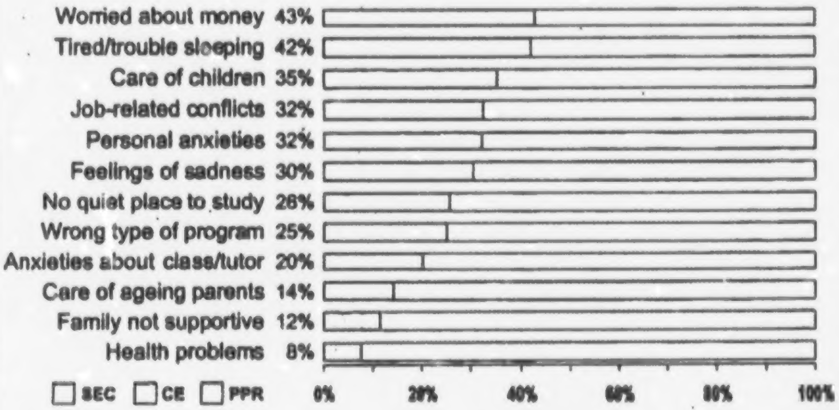


Figure 48

Factors affecting concentration of those still enrolled



Learners could cite more than one reason.

Composite factors

Summary

Of those who enrolled and stayed in a program, the great majority reported positive experiences; however, a major area of dissatisfaction related to the amount of time per week spent in the program. Other areas in need of improvement included the need for smaller classes, more individual attention, more relevant material, more knowledgeable tutors, and diverse program locations. The issue of how long some people must wait to start a program is a clear problem. Once in programs, it is clear that many learners are dealing with multiple issues and concerns that make their involvement precarious in the absence of additional supports. □

Chapter Five

Conclusion

There are three primary sites around which participation issues cluster: program/policy-related (PPR), socioeconomic-circumstantial (SEC) and cognitive-emotive (CE) factors.* This study confirms that patterns of participation are mediated by a highly complex set of factors operating simultaneously. Together, these factors make a potent mix that dramatically affects how and if people are able to participate in programs.

The good news from this study is that when people did enrol, they generally reported high levels of satisfaction with programs. The bad news is that a large proportion of callers either did not enrol or dropped out after enrolling. This picture, corroborated by numerous other studies,† is dramatized when we remember that for methodological reasons, this study more than likely overestimates enrolment. A further reason for concern is that the participation of many of those who were still in programs at the point of follow-up can only be described as precarious because of the wide range of SEC, PPR and CE factors operating for them.

There is a serious problem with access to literacy and upgrading education in Canada. While literacy may be more on the public agenda than ever before, it is nevertheless not at a level to fundamentally shift the rates of adult literacy in Canada. The current demand, to say nothing of the potential demand, is not being met.

We know that only a small fraction of people with low literacy skills contact programs in the first place. Given the complex array of SEC and CE factors that callers must navigate before contacting a group, it is nothing short of tragic that they then face PPR barriers to enrolment. If people do enrol, they often encounter an obstacle-course of SEC barriers for which there is little concrete support. This leads large numbers of learners to drop out of programs. When someone is not able to enrol, has to drop out, or has to struggle to remain in a program, it no doubt carries a powerful message back to the person's family, friends, neighbours and co-workers, who consequently may lower their own expectations about the value of contacting a program.

The shocking statistic is perhaps no longer how many Canadians have low literacy skills, but rather how few are being helped by the country's current service delivery mechanisms. And yet, it is encouraging that more than three-quarters of those who dropped out or didn't enrol in the first place said they would seek help again in the future. Much needs to be done to ensure a more positive picture when they do call again.

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* Defined and † described in Chapter Two.

Key findings

Making contact

The potential learners in this study come from all age groups, from communities large and small, and have a very wide range of formal education and employment status. Most of the potential learners were first-time callers, who learned about programs and how to contact them through a variety of methods, including media advertising and posters; the telephone book; community groups, agencies and schools; and word-of-mouth from family, co-workers, friends and acquaintances.

Reasons for calling

Callers were looking for help with reading and writing, getting a high-school diploma or credits, math alone or as a component with reading and writing, employability skills (e.g., vocational training), English as a second language, or something else such as a learning disability. Callers had a broad diversity of motivations for wanting to upgrade their skills; more callers were interested in improving their literacy skills for personal, social, and general educational reasons than for job or retraining purposes. This points to a need to gear programs to a wide range of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Enrolment and nonenrolment

Less than half of the respondents who inquired about literacy or upgrading services enrolled in a program. Program/policy-related factors were the main factors driving nonenrolment for the largest percentage of callers (43 percent). These factors include not being called back by a program, long waiting lists, inconvenient class locations and times, wrong content or teaching structure, and having to pay for the program or tutor. Having to wait a long time to start a program was a factor for close to a third of those who did not enrol. Of those with children, half of the women and a quarter of the men said they would have called earlier had there been on-site childcare. Upon calling, more than 40 percent of women and close to 20 percent of men cited childcare conflicts as a factor in their decision not to enrol.

Dropping out

Of those respondents who enrolled, one-third had dropped out by the six-to-eight-month mark. Socioeconomic–circumstantial factors were the main reason reported by more than half of those who dropped out of programs. Job-related pressures, money problems, and childcare conflicts were the primary factors. Another quarter cited program/policy-related factors as their most important reason for dropping out. These factors include wrong program level, content or teaching structure, inconvenient location, or program cancellation.

Learners' experiences

Of those who enrolled, close to 10 percent were still on waiting lists at the time of the follow-up call. Of those who had completed or were still in a program, the great majority (88 percent) reported high levels of satisfaction with the program level, content and teaching structure. However, a striking area of dissatisfaction was the low number of hours per week spent with a teacher or tutor.

The participation of many learners in literacy and upgrading programs can only be characterized as precarious due to the large number of factors affecting concentration. For those who remained in programs, money worries were cited as the primary factor that made it difficult to concentrate and learn, followed by tiredness/trouble sleeping, care of children, and job-related conflicts.

Changing the picture

What would it take for the picture to change from one of low enrolment, high dropout, and precarious participation? Answering this question requires an understanding of why the picture looks this way in the first place, which relates primarily to the structure and resource base of current delivery services. There are regional variations in service delivery, best practices and funding: Some jurisdictions deliver literacy services primarily through community colleges, others through community-based programs or school boards, and still others through a mix of sites. Programs may be run by volunteers or paid staff; instruction may be through tutors or teachers. Overall, programs vary from a few hours a week of one-on-one tutoring by volunteers in learners' homes to full-time college programs with certified teachers. Some areas have training standards; most do not. Referrals may be done through central toll-free numbers, or potential learners may call service providers directly.

All of these variations emerge from and take place against the backdrop of complicated funding issues. Adult basic literacy services in Canada have long been the victim of federal–provincial jurisdictional "cracks" and lack of coordinated effort or sustained political will. Literacy groups have access to radically different amounts and types of funding depending on province and geographical area. It is, however, fair to say that most if not all areas of the country have low, shifting levels of funding, which leads to fragmented service delivery and promotes insecurity and wasteful competition among service deliverers. The degree to which these resource-based problems affect service delivery is reflected in the organizational profiles of the groups who participated in this study (Long 1998):

- More than a third have no full-time staff.
- More than two-thirds have one or less full-time staff.
- Close to 40 percent are open less than 35 hours per week.
- Fifty-seven percent close for more than four weeks per year.
- High numbers of groups use volunteers to cover critical teaching and referral work.
- Half do not provide special training for staff or volunteers who do referrals.

Some of the factors described by the callers in this study may be addressable immediately by individual programs; others, only by expanding or adapting existing services; and yet others, only through broader social policies. This study lends strong support to the chorus of reports and papers that have commented on the piecemeal, patchwork nature of literacy education, and have called for a more integrated, cohesive approach in which educational, labour and social policies operate in tandem (Barker 1999; Hoddinnott 1998; Hoddinnott and White 1991; Middleton 1999; Quigley 1997).

While there are no magic bullets, certain factors do stand out as needing particular attention. A great many of these require strategies involving the community as a whole, rather than just literacy groups. For example, this study confirms the complex relationship between poverty and low literacy skills, and points to a real need to address the financial obstacles of low-income learners to participating and remaining in adult literacy education. Almost half of the respondents in this study lived in households with annual combined incomes of less than $20,000 a year. Financial pressure was the key factor cited by respondents who dropped out of or chose not to enrol in a literacy or upgrading program. Those adults who did enrol cited money worries as the prime factor making it difficult for them to concentrate and learn.

An issue related to financial obstacles is childcare conflicts, which was clearly a factor for 35 percent of those who did not enrol (42 percent of women and 19 percent of men) and 29 percent of those who dropped out (40 percent of women and 23 percent of men). Furthermore, among those with children, half of the women and a quarter of the men said they would have called earlier if there had been childcare on site. Options and policy-based solutions—from the partnering of literacy providers with local childcare groups, to subsidizing on-site or community-based childcare spaces—should be assessed. Workable options would undoubtedly result in higher enrolment in literacy programs.

Another particularly difficult area is job-related conflicts. The need for continued attention to promoting workplace basic-skills programs is clear. But it would be both simplistic and problematic to stop there, when we know that those with lower levels of literacy are more likely to do work that is unpredictably or inflexibly scheduled, intermittent and precarious—in short, the workplace settings least likely to offer programs or possibilities for long-term program engagement. Therefore, community-based programming designed to accommodate the work patterns of those with low levels of literacy skill is also needed; this means developing programming to allow for intermittent attendance and variable hours.

Overall, some practice and programming solutions can be addressed within the resources currently available; but most solutions require longer-term strategies—those that relate to questions about building the capacity of the field to meet the current and potential demand for services, in such a way as to fundamentally shift rates of basic literacy skill in the country. This means moving away from our current patchwork of assorted programs and services, toward a genuine system for adult basic education.

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for every level of the literacy field, pertaining to learners, teachers, tutors, referral and intake workers, program administrators, advocates, academics, funders and policy-makers. The challenges identified by this study offer considerable scope for action at all levels of government and by many different sectors, groups and organizations. The way we approach these challenges will demonstrate our collective thoughtfulness, innovation, and determination to provide fair and equitable educational opportunities for people who did not complete their early education and who now wish to develop specific skills or to gain credentials.

Given the complex interrelationship between various factors affecting student enrolment and retention, identifying any single starting point or locus where change should begin is obviously difficult. Still, in an interconnected system, the pressure for change must come from somewhere. Certainly, it is tempting to direct individual literacy or upgrading programs to revamp their approach or slash their waiting lists; but without addressing funding and significant infrastructural change, that may not be possible. Given that patterns of participation are influenced by a wide range of interrelated factors, it is critical to find broad-based, integrated solutions that address multiple barriers; this means thinking well beyond the conventional boundaries of the literacy field itself. From a public-policy perspective, this means recognizing adult basic education as a critical component of community and human resource development that strengthens individuals, families, communities and the economy, and therefore developing integrated literacy policy across broad areas of policy jurisdiction. ☐

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Appendix

National Follow-up Survey

ABC CANADA in partnership with Literacy BC

A-2 **A—Introductory Information**
A-5 **B—Didn't Call**
A-7 **C—Called But Didn't Enrol**
A-8 **D—Enrolled But Hasn't Started**
A-11 **E—Enrolled and Started**
A-14 **F—Dropped Out**
A-16 **G—Enrolled and Completed**
A-19 **H—Demographic Information**

Contextual Information

chk1 INTERVIEWER: Please enter gender of respondent (who is called R, in this questionnaire).
1) Male
5) Female
88) Don't know

chk2 When you called [the group], were you calling for yourself, or for someone else?
1) Calling for self [*go to section* A—Introductory Information]
5) Calling for someone else

chk3 Who were you calling for?
1) Husband
2) Wife
3) Father
4) Mother
5) Son
6) Daughter
7) Boyfriend
8) Girlfriend
10) Other [*specify relationship of learner to respondent; for example*, cousin, aunt, uncle, friend]

chk4 INTERVIEWER: Is the person R called for male or female? ASK if uncertain; question "text fills" [marked with square brackets] will be based on this response.
1) Male
5) Female

NOTE TO READER: This section establishes the profile of R or the person R called for, so that appropriate language [you/he/she, you/him/her, etc.] is used throughout the survey.

A—Introductory Information

A1a Thinking back to when you first called [the group], what type of program were you looking for?
INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ LIST. If response includes reading and writing, probe for approximate grade level: "About what grade level were you looking for?" If R has an obvious accent, probe for ESL.

1) Reading, writing (approx. grade 0–8)
2) Reading, writing (approx. grade 9+)
3) Reading, writing (can't classify by grade)
4) Math/numeracy only
5) Math/numeracy along with reading and writing (grade 0–8)
6) Math/numeracy along with reading and writing (grade 9+)
7) High school diploma/credits (including GED)
8) English as a second language (ESL) [*go to* A1b]
9) Employability skills (literacy and job search, literacy and computers)
10) Other [*specify*]

[*go to* A2a]

A1b What is the language [you/he/she] first learned and still use[s]?

10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A2a What was the most important reason that [you/he/she] wanted to enrol in that type of program?

1) Help get a job
2) Help keep a job
3) Help get a promotion
4) Improve daily living skills (filling out forms, banking, shopping)
5) Upgrading for further training
6) General educational improvement
7) Personal well-being (e.g., self-confidence)
8) Social well-being (e.g., social participation)
9) Family reasons (for kids, at urging of family members)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know [*go to* A3a]
99) Refused [*go to* A3a]

A2b Were there any other reasons that it felt important for [you/him/her] to enrol in the program?
INTERVIEWER: Enter only the SECOND mention here.

0) No second mention [*go to* A3a]
1) Help get a job
2) Help keep a job
3) Help get a promotion
4) Improve daily living skills (filling out forms, banking, shopping)
5) Upgrading for further training
6) General educational improvement
7) Personal well-being (e.g., self-confidence)
8) Social well-being (e.g., social participation)
9) Family reasons (for kids, urging of family members)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know [*go to* A3a]
99) Refused [*go to* A3a]

A2c Any other reasons?
INTERVIEWER: Enter only the THIRD mention here.

0) No third mention [*go to* A3a]
1) Help get a job
2) Help keep a job
3) Help get a promotion
4) Improve daily living skills (filling out forms, banking, shopping)
5) Upgrading for further training
6) General educational improvement
7) Personal well-being (e.g., self-confidence)
8) Social well-being (e.g., social participation)
9) Family reasons (for kids, urging of family members)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know [*go to* A3a]
99) Refused [*go to* A3a]

A2d Any other reasons?
INTERVIEWER: Enter only the FOURTH mention here.

0) No fourth mention
1) Help get a job
2) Help keep a job
3) Help get a promotion
4) Improve daily living skills (filling out forms, banking, shopping)
5) Upgrading for further training
6) General educational improvement
7) Personal well-being (e.g., self-confidence)
8) Social well-being (e.g., social participation)
9) Family reasons (for kids, urging of family members)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A3a Had YOU PERSONALLY ever seen or heard any ads on TV, radio, bus shelters, or newspapers that talked about adults going back to school to improve their reading, writing or math?

INTERVIEWER: This question is about R, the respondent, regardless of whether R is a potential learner or family/friend of a potential learner.

1) Yes [*go to* A3b]
5) No [*go to* A4]
88) Don't know [*go to* A4]
99) Refused [*go to* A4]

A3b Do you think [this ad was/these ads were] part of what influenced your decision to call [the group] last [the month called]?

INTERVIEWER: This question is about the respondent, regardless of whether R is a potential learner or family/friend of a potential learner.

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A4 How did you first hear about [the group]?

INTERVIEWER: This question is about the respondent, regardless of whether R is a potential learner or family/friend of a potential learner.

1) Media source (TV, newspaper, bus shelter, poster)
2) Community group/agency/professional intermediary (e.g., doctor, social worker, employment counsellor, librarian, etc.)
3) Family/friend
4) Phone book (white pages)
5) Phone book (Yellow Pages™)
6) School/school board
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A5a Before your call to [the group] last [the month called], did [you/he/she] take any classes or study with a tutor to improve [your/his/her] reading, writing or math skills?

1) Yes [*go to* A5b]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* A6]

A5b How did it go?

INTERVIEWER: If R gives a vague answer, say "Was it useful to you at the time?" If response is positive, say "That's great;" if negative, say "I'm sorry to hear that," and probe for details: "Please tell me [what happened/what the problem was]."

1) Overall, positive
3) Overall, seems neutral
5) Overall, seems negative [specify problem(s)] [go to A5c]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* A6]

A5c Were there any other problems?

1) Yes [*specify*] [*go to* A5d]
5) No SECOND problem
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* A6]

A5d Were there any other problems?

1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No THIRD problem
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A6 Where did you find the phone number or contact information for [the group], the group that you called last [the month called]?

INTERVIEWER: Probe. If R says phone book, ask "Yellow Pages or white pages?" Note that this question is about the respondent, regardless of whether R is a potential learner or family/friend of a potential learner.

1) Phone book (Yellow Pages™)
2) Phone book (white pages)
3) Community group/agency/professional intermediary; e.g., doctor, social worker, librarian, employment counsellor, etc.
4) School/school board
5) Family/friend
6) Media source: poster, ad, bus shelter, etc.
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[if the answer to question A5a is YES, *go to* A8a]

A7 When you called [the group] last [the month called], was that the first time that [you/he/she] looked for help with reading, writing or math as an adult?
1) Yes
5) No [*go to* A9a]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A8a Thinking back to before you called [the group], what do you think was the MAIN reason that you did not call sooner?
INTERVIEWER: If R says lack of time, ask him/her to specify. Do NOT read the following list.
1) Lacked information/did not know organization existed
2) Fear/stigma
3) Financial reasons
4) Job-related
5) Family responsibilities
6) Lack of time [*specify*]
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A8b Were there any other reasons?
0) No other reasons
1) Lacked information
2) Fear/stigma
3) Financial reasons
4) Job-related
5) Family responsibilities
6) Lack of time [*specify*]
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A9a INTERVIEWER: Ask only if R him/herself is the potential learner.
Did any of your friends or family members encourage you to make the call?
1) Yes, friend(s) [*go to* A9b to ask about family members]
3) Yes, family member(s) [*go to* A9b to ask about friends]
5) Yes, both friend(s) and family member(s)
7) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* A10a]

A9b INTERVIEWER: Ask only if R him/herself is the potential learner. Enter SECOND mention here.
Did any of your [friends/family members] encourage you to make the call?
1) Yes, family member
3) Yes, friends
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

A10a Thinking back to your call to [the group] last [the month called], did [you/he/she] call the programs that they talked about?
INTERVIEWER: If R received three names but called only one, classify as Yes (1). If they enrolled right away, ask if the organization is a delivery organization. If YES, enter (7).
1) Yes [*go to* A11a]
5) No [*go to section* B—Didn't Call]
7) Not applicable—the group they called was a delivery organization
88) Don't know (i.e., if family or friend)
99) Refused

A10b I won't continue asking about [your/your family member's/ your friend's] experience, but it would be helpful if I could ask a few more general questions about [you/ him/her].
[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

A11a Did [you/he/she] actually sign up for any program?
1) Yes [includes completed the program] [*go to* A11b]
5) No [*go to section* C—Called But Didn't Enrol]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

A11b [Are you/Is he/Is she] currently studying, on a waiting list to start, or started but did not complete?
INTERVIEWER: Probe for applicable answer: Did you start? Are you still going to the class?
1) Currently studying [*go to section* E—Enrolled and Started]
[Note: If they started but are not attending now, classify them as (1) currently studying if they intend to go back to the same program within the next four weeks. Otherwise, classify them as (5) having dropped out.]

2) Completed program [*go to* section H—Demographic Information]
3) On waiting list to start [*go to section* D—Enrolled But Hasn't Started] [Note: Some can sign up over the phone; i.e., they have enrolled, but have not started the program. Classify them as being (3) on the waiting list.]
5) Started but did not complete [*go to* A12]
7) Not pursuing study at this time; did not sign up for any sort of class/tutoring program [*go to section* C—Called But Didn't Enrol]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

A12 How long ago did [you/he/she] stop?
1) 1–3 weeks [*go to* A13]
4) 4 weeks or more
88) Don't remember
99) Refused

[*go to section* F—Dropped Out]

A13 [Do you/Does he/Does she] plan to attend within the next two weeks?
1) Yes [*go to section* E—Enrolled and Started]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* F—Dropped Out]

B—Didn't Call

B1a What was the most important reason that [you/he/she] didn't call [the group]?
INTERVIEWER: Enter only FIRST mention here.
10) [*specify*] [*go to* B1b]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* B2]

B1b Was there any other reason that [you/he/she] didn't call?
INTERVIEWER: Enter only SECOND mention here.
0) No second mention [*go to* B2]
10) [*specify*] [*go to* B1c]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* B2]

B1c Was there any other reason that [you/he/she] didn't call?
INTERVIEWER: Enter only THIRD mention here.
0) No third mention
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2 In addition to the reason[s] you just said, I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for why they do NOT sign up [for a program/with a tutor]. For each, please answer yes or no.

B2a First, because you thought [you/he/she] wouldn't be able to [attend the classes/meet with the tutor] at a time convenient for [you/him/her]. Is this part of the reason why [you/he/she] didn't call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2b Because [you/he/she] thought the level would be too high. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2c Because [you/he/she] thought the level would be too low. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2d Because the class would not be at a convenient location. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2e Because [you/he/she] would have to wait a long time to start. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2f Because the people [you/he/she] spoke with didn't seem friendly or helpful. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2g Because [you were/he was/she was] worried about money problems in general. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2h Because [you have/he has/she has] to care for children. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no children
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2i Because [you have/he has/she has] to care for ageing parents or other people. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no ageing parents etc.
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2j Family members are not supportive of [your/his/her] studies. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2k Because studying would conflict with [your/his/her] job. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—not working
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2l Because [you/he/she] didn't think it would help [you/him/her] in the long run. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2m Because [you/he/she] felt worried or nervous about going back to school. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2n Because [you have/he has/she has] trouble sleeping at night. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2o Because [you have/he has/she has] health problems. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2p Feelings of sadness. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B2q Were there any other reasons why [you/he/she] did not call?
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B3 Do you think [you/he/she] will call in the future?
1) Yes [*go to section* H—Demographic Information]
3) Maybe
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

B4 Is there anything that might influence [you/him/her] to get in contact with a program in the future?
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

C—Called But Didn't Enroll

C1a What was the most important reason why [you/he/she] didn't sign up?
What types of things were you busy with? OR What was happening for you that made it too much right now?
INTERVIEWER: Enter FIRST MENTION ONLY here.
10) [*specify*] [*go to* C1b]
88) Don't remember [*go to* C2a]
99) Refused [*go to* C2a]

C1b Were there any other reasons that [you/he/she] didn't sign up?
What types of things were you busy with? OR What was happening for you that made it too much right now?
INTERVIEWER: Enter SECOND mention ONLY, here.
0) No second mention [*go to* C2a]
10) [*specify*] [*go to* C1c]
88) Don't remember [*go to* C2a]
99) Refused [*go to* C2a]

C1c Any other reasons?
What types of things were you busy with? OR What was happening for you that made it too much right now?
INTERVIEWER: Enter THIRD mention ONLY, here.
0) No third mention
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't remember
99) Refused

C2 In addition to reason(s) you just said, I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for why they do NOT sign up [for a program/with a tutor]. For each, please answer yes or no.

C2a First, because the classes weren't at a convenient time, or the tutor couldn't meet at a convenient time. Is this part of the reason why [you/he/she] didn't sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2b Because it didn't sound like the right type of program for [you/him/her]. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up [for a program/with a tutor]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2c Because [you/he/she] thought the level would be too high. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up [for a program/with a tutor]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2d Because [you/he/she] thought the level would be too low. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2e Because the class was not in a convenient location. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2f Because [you/he/she] would have to wait a long time to start. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2g INTERVIEWER: This question is about the RESPONDENT, regardless of whether R is a potential learner or family/friend of a potential learner.
Because the people [you/he/she] spoke with didn't seem friendly or helpful. Was this a reason for not signing up?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2h Because [you were/he was/she was] worried about money problems in general. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up [for a program/with a tutor]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2i Because [you have/he has/she has] to care for children. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable, no children
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2j Because [you have/he has/she has] to care for ageing parents or other people. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable, no ageing parents etc.
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2k Family members are not supportive of [your/his/her] studies. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2*l* Because studying would conflict with [your/his/her] job. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up [for a program/with a tutor]?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable, not working
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2m Because [you/he/she] didn't think it would help [you/him/her] in the long run. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C2n Because [you/he/she] felt worried or nervous about taking the program. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] did not sign up [for a program/with a tutor]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C3 Do you think [you/he/she] might look for help with reading, writing or math again in the future?
1) Yes
5) No [*go to* C5]
7) Undecided
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C4 In your opinion, if the timing was right and it was the right kind of program, what do you think would be the ideal number of hours per week that [you/he/she] would want to spend in the program?
1–35) [mark number of hours]
36) Thirty-six or more hours
88) Don't know
99) Refused

C5 Is there anything you can think of that might help [you/him/her] decide to call back or sign up in the future?
INTERVIEWER: Probe for details.
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

D—Enrolled But Hasn't Started

D1 How long [have you/has he/has she] been waiting to start a program?
INTERVIEWER:
1) Days [*go to* D1d]
2) Weeks [*go to* D1w]
3) Months [*go to* D1m]
88) Don't know [*go to* D2]
99) Refused [*go to* D2]

D1d Interviewer: Enter number of DAYS here.
1–30)
31) Thirty-one days or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* D2]

D1w Interviewer: Enter number of WEEKS here.
1–52)
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* D2]

D1m Interviewer: Enter number of MONTHS here.
1–12)
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D2 Approximately how much longer do you think [you/he/she] will have to wait?
Interviewer:
1) Days [*go to* D2d]
2) Weeks [*go to* D2w]
3) Months [*go to* D2m]
88) Don't know [*go to* D3]
99) Refused [*go to* D3]

D2d Interviewer: Enter number of DAYS here.
1–30)
31) Thirty-one days or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* D3]

D2w Interviewer: Enter number of WEEKS here.
1–52)
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* D3]

D2m Interviewer: Enter number of MONTHS here.
1–12)
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D3 How [do you/does he/does she] feel about having to wait?
Interviewer: Probe for details, personal reasons, or program-specific reasons.
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D4a Will [you/he/she] be studying in a classroom with a teacher, with a tutor, or in some other way?
1) Classroom with a teacher
2) Tutor
3) Classroom or learning centre with no teacher (with a monitor or computer-assisted)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D4b Do you feel this is the best arrangement for [you/him/her]?
1) Yes [*go to* D5]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D4c What type of arrangement would [you/he/she] prefer?
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D5 As far as you know, will the program be at the right level for [you/him/her]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D6 Does the program run for a specific number of weeks or months, or is it ongoing?
1) Ongoing
3) Weeks [*go to* D6w]
5) Months [*go to* D6m]
88) Don't know [*go to* D7a]
99) Refused [*go to* D7a]

D6w How many weeks?
1–52) [mark number of weeks]
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* D9]

D6m How many months?
1–12) [mark number of months]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D7a How many hours per week will [you/he/she] be in the program [working with a tutor/in a classroom/studying by correspondence]?
1–35) [mark number of hours per week]
36) Thirty-six or more hours per week
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D7b Do you think [you/he/she] will be able to learn the things [you/he/she] would like to learn in that time?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D8 In your opinion, if the timing was right and it was the right kind of program, what do you think would be the ideal number of hours per week that [you/he/she] would want to be in class, working with a tutor, or studying by correspondence?
1–35) [mark number of hours per week]
36) Thirty-six or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9 A lot of people have told us that they sometimes have difficulty concentrating on their studies, for many different reasons. I'm going to read a list of reasons that people sometimes give for having difficulty in concentrating. Even though [you haven't/he hasn't/she hasn't] started yet, please answer yes or no if you think any of these things might make it difficult for [you/him/her] to concentrate once [you do/he does/she does] start.

D9a Hours of [your/his/her] job or time spent looking for a job. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—not working nor looking for a job
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9b Caring for [your/his/her] children. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no children
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9c Caring for [your/his/her] ageing parents or other people. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult at times?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no ageing parents etc.
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9d Feeling tired because of having trouble sleeping. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9e Because [you were/he was/she was] worried about money problems in general. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9f [Your/His/Her] health problems. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9g No private place at home to study. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9h Feelings of fear or anxiety about the class or studying with a tutor. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9i Feelings of fear or anxiety about personal problems. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9j Family members are not supportive of [your/his/her] studies. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9k Feelings of sadness. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D9l Were there any other reasons [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

D10a Will [you/he/she] have to pay any money for the class or tutor, or materials and other expenses?
INTERVIEWER: If R expresses concern about not having been told about costs, assure him/her that participants would have been told by now if there was a cost.
1) Yes, fees for the class or tutor [*go to* D10b]
2) Yes, fees for materials/labs/other expenses [*go to* D10b]
3) Both class/tutor and materials/other expenses [*go to* D10b]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

D10b Will this cause financial difficulty for [you/him/her]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

E—Enrolled and Started

E1a After you called about the program, about how many weeks did it take before [you/he/she] started?
0) Immediately [*go to* E2]
1-52) [mark number of weeks] [if less than three weeks, *go to* E2]
53) More than a year
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E1b Why did it take that long to begin?
1) There was a waiting list to start with a class or tutor, or no tutor was available
5) That's when the things were scheduled to start
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E2 [Are you/Is he/Is she] studying in a classroom with a teacher, with a tutor, or some other way?
1) Classroom with a teacher
2) Tutor
3) Classroom or learning centre with no teacher (a monitor or computer-assisted)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E3a How's it going?
INTERVIEWER: If R gives a vague answer, ask, "Is it what you expected it would be?" "Are there any problems at all?"
1) Overall, seems positive
3) Overall, seems neutral
5) Overall, seems negative [*specify*] [*go to* E3b]
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* E4a]

E3b Any other problems?
0) No SECOND mention
10) [*specify*] [*go to* E3c]
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* E4a]

E3c Any other problems?
0) No THIRD mention
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E4a Is the class that [you are/he is/she is] in the right type of arrangement for [you/him/her]? OR Is the tutor the right person for [you/him/her]?
1) Yes [*go to* E5]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E4b What type of [arrangement/tutor] would [you/he/she] prefer?
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E5 Is the program at the right level for [you/him/her]?
INTERVIEWER: If NO, probe: Is it too high or too low?
1) Yes
5) No (too high)
7) No (too low)
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E6 Does the program offer the type of things [you/he/she] would like to learn?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Somewhat
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E7 Do you feel [your/his/her] skill level has improved as a result of the program?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E8 Does the class run for a specific number of weeks or months, or is it ongoing?
1) Weeks [*go to* E8w]
3) Months [*go to* E8m]
5) Ongoing
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* E9]

E8w How many weeks?
1–52) [mark number of weeks]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* E9]

E8m How many months?
1–12) [mark number of months]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E9 Do you think [you/he/she] will be able to achieve the things [you want/he wants/she wants] to learn in that time?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E10a How many hours per week [are you/is he/is she] [in class/working with a tutor]?
INTERVIEWER: Be prepared to compare this answer with the response to D10b.
1–35) [mark number of hours]
36) Thirty-six or more hours
88) Don't know [*go to* E11]
99) Refused

E10b In your opinion, if the timing was right and it was the right kind of [class/tutor], what do you think would be the ideal number of hours per week that [you/he/she] would want to be [in class/working with a tutor]?
1–35) [mark number of hours]
36) Thirty-six or more hours
88) Don't know [*go to* E11]
99) Refused

E10c Why do you think [you/he/she] would want to study [in a class/with a tutor] [more/fewer] hours per week?
INTERVIEWER: Probe for reason(s); allow TWO answers. If R makes a vague statement about wanting to learn more quickly, say, "Why is it important for [you/him/her] to learn more quickly?"
10) [*specify*]
11) [*specify second response*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E11 Many people have told us that they enjoy [their classes/working with their tutors]. We are also interested in understanding if anything could be improved. If [you/he/she] could change one thing about the [class/tutoring], what would it be?
INTERVIEWER: If R says everything's fine, probe: "Could you think of anything else, even very small, to improve the class?"
0) Would not change anything

1) Move more slowly
2) Move more quickly
3) More individual attention
4) Smaller class
5) More relevant material
6) More knowledgeable teacher or tutor
7) More hours per week/meet more often
8) More convenient time
9) More convenient location
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12 A lot of people have told us that they sometimes have difficulty concentrating on their studies for many different reasons. I'm going to read a list of reasons that people sometimes give for having difficulty in concentrating. Please answer yes or no if you think any of these things might make it difficult for [you/him/her] to concentrate.

E12a Hours of [your/his/her] job or time spent looking for a job. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?

1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—not working
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12b Caring for children. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might sometimes find it difficult to concentrate on studying?

1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no children
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12c Caring for ageing parents or other people. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate at times?

1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no ageing parents etc.
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12d Feeling tired because of having trouble sleeping. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12e Because [you were/he was/she was] worried about money problems in general. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12f Feeling that the [class/tutor] just isn't right for [you/him/her]. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12g [Your/His/Her] health problems. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12h No private place at home to study. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12i Feelings of fear or anxiety about [the class/studying with the tutor]. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12j Feelings of fear or anxiety about personal problems. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12k Family members are not supportive of [your/his/her] studies. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find sometimes find concentrating difficult?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12*l* Feelings of sadness. Is this a reason [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E12m Are there any other reasons [you/he/she] might find it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E13a [Are you/Is he/Is she] able to [attend the class/meet with the tutor] most of the time?
1) Yes [*go to* E14]
5) No
7) Correspondence, self-taught program [*go to* E14]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E13b What stops [you/him/her] from [attending the class/meeting with the tutor], most of the time?
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

E14a Did [you/he/she] have to pay any money for the class, the tutor, materials, labs or other expenses?
INTERVIEWER: If R expresses concern about not having been told about costs, assure him/her that participants would have been told by now if there was a cost.
1) Yes, fees for the class or tutor [*go to* E14b]
2) Yes, fees for materials, labs, other expenses [*go to* E14b]
3) Both class/tutor and materials [*go to* E14b]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

E14b Did this cause any financial difficulty for [you/him/her]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

F—Dropped Out

F1a What was the MOST important reason that [you/he/she] stopped attending the program?
INTERVIEWER: Enter only the most important reason here.
10) [*specify*] [*go to* F1b]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* F2]

F1b What was the other reason that [you/he/she] stopped?
INTERVIEWER: Enter the SECOND most important reason here.
0) No second mention
10) [*specify*] [*go to* F1c]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* F2]

F1c Any other reason?
INTERVIEWER: Enter the THIRD most important reason here.
0) No third mention
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2 I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for why they did not continue in a program. For each, please answer yes or no.

F2a Because [you/he/she] didn't think it would help [you/him/her] in the long run. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped attending the program?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2b Because the level was too high. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No

88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2c Because the level was too low. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2d Because the class was not in a convenient location. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2e Because the teacher or the tutor wasn't very helpful or knowledgeable. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2f Because [you were/he was/she was] worried about money problems in general. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2g Because [you have/he has/she has] to care for children. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no children
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2h Because [you have/he has/she has] to care for ageing parents or other people. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no ageing parents, etc.
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2i Family members are not supportive of [your/his/her] studies. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2j Because studying would conflict with [your/his/her] job. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—not working
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2k Because [you have/he has/she has] health problems. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2l Because [you/he/she] felt worried or nervous about going back to school. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2m Because [you have/he has/she has] trouble sleeping at night. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2n Feelings of sadness. Is this a reason why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F2o Were there any other reasons why [you/he/she] stopped going?
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F3 Approximately how long did [you/he/she] [go to the class/work with a tutor] before [you/he/she] stopped?
1) Days [*go to* F3d]
2) Weeks [*go to* F3w]
3) Months [*go to* F3m]
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* F4]

F3d Interviewer: Enter number of DAYS here.
1–30)
31) Thirty-one days or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* F4]

F3w Interviewer: Enter number of WEEKS here.
1–52)
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* F4]

F3m Interviewer: Enter number of MONTHS here.
1–12)
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F4 Is there anything that might influence [you/him/her] to sign up [for a class/with a tutor] again?
Interviewer: Allow TWO responses.
1) Yes [*specify*]
2) Yes [*specify second response*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F5 How many hours per week [were you/was he/was she] [in class/working with a tutor/studying by correspondence]?
1–35) [mark number of hours]
36) Thirty-six or more hours
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F6 Did the class run for a specific number of weeks or months, or was it ongoing?
1) Weeks [*go to* F6w]
3) Months [*go to* F6m]
5) Ongoing, includes drop-in centres
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* F7]

F6w How many weeks?
1–52) [mark number of weeks]
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* F7]

F6m How many months?
1–12) [mark number of months]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

F7 In your opinion, if the timing was right and it was the right kind of [program/tutor], what do you think would be the ideal number of hours per week that [you/he/she] would want to be [in class/working with a tutor/studying by correspondence]?
1–35) [mark number of hours per week]
36) Thirty-six or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G—Enrolled and Completed

G1a After you called about the program, about how many weeks did it take before [you/he/she] started?
0) Immediately [*go to* G2]
1–52) [mark number of weeks] [if less than three weeks, *go to* G2]
53) More than a year
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G1b Why did it take that long to begin?
1) There was a waiting list to start with a class or tutor, or no tutor was available
5) That's when the program was scheduled to start
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G2 [Were you/Was he/Was she] studying in a classroom with a teacher, with a tutor, or some other way?
1) Classroom with a teacher
2) Tutor
3) Classroom or learning centre with no teacher (a monitor or computer-assisted)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G3a How did it go?

INTERVIEWER: If R gives a vague answer, ask, "Is it what you expected it would be?" "Are there any problems at all?"

1) Overall, seems positive
3) Overall, seems neutral
5) Overall, seems negative [*specify problems*] [*go to* G3b]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* G4a]

G3b Any other problems?

0) No SECOND mention
10) [*specify*] [*go to* G4c]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* G5]

G3c Any other problems?

0) No THIRD mention
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G4a Was the [class/course] that [you have/he has/she has] the right type of arrangement for [you/him/her]? OR Was the tutor the right person for [you/him/her]?

1) Yes [*go to* G5]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G4b What type of arrangement or tutor would [you/he/she] prefer?

10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G5 Was the program at the right level for [you/him/her]?

INTERVIEWER: If NO, probe: Was it too high or too low?

1) Yes
5) No (too high)
7) No (too low)
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G6 Did the program offer the type of things [you/he/she] wanted to learn?

1) Yes
5) No
7) Somewhat
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G7 Do you feel [your/his/her] skill level has improved as a result of the program?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G8 Did the class run for a specific number of weeks or months, or was it ongoing?

1) Weeks [*go to* G8w]
3) Months [*go to* G8m]
5) Ongoing
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* G9]

G8w How many weeks?

1–52) [mark number of weeks]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* G9]

G8m How many months?

1–12) [mark number of months]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G9 Do you think [you/he/she] achieved the things [you/he/she] wanted to learn in that time?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G10a How many hours per week [were you/was he/was she] spending [in class/working with a tutor/studying by correspondence]?

1–35) [mark number of hours]
36) Thirty-six or more hours
88) Don't know [*go to* G11]
99) Refused

G10b In your opinion, if the timing was right and it was the right kind of [class/tutor], what do you think would be the ideal number of hours per week that [you/he/she] would want to be [in class/working with a tutor/studying by correspondence]?

1–35) [mark number of hours]
36) Thirty-six or more hours
88) Don't know [*go to* G11]
99) Refused

G10c Why do you think [you/he/she] would want to study [in a class/with a tutor] more hours per week?

INTERVIEWER: Probe for a reason. If R makes a vague statement about wanting to learn more quickly, say "Why is it important for you/him/her to learn more quickly?"

10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G11 Many people have told us that they enjoyed [their classes/working with their tutors]. We are also interested in understanding if anything could be improved. If [you/he/she] could change one thing about the [class/tutoring], what would it be?

INTERVIEWER: If R said everything's fine, probe: "Could you think of anything else, even very small, to improve the class?"

0) Would change nothing
1) Move more slowly
2) Move more quickly
3) More individual attention
4) Smaller class
5) More relevant material
6) More knowledgeable teacher or tutor
7) More hours per week/meet more often
8) More convenient time
9) More convenient location
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12 A lot of people have told us that they sometimes had difficulty concentrating on their studies, for many different reasons. I'm going to read a list of reasons that people sometimes give for having difficulty in concentrating. Please answer yes or no if you think any of these things made it difficult for [you/him/her] to concentrate.

G12a Hours of [your/his/her] job or time spent looking for a job. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?

1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—not working or looking for a job
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12b Caring for children. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate on studying?

1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no children
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12c Caring for ageing parents or other people. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate at times?

1) Yes
5) No
7) Not applicable—no ageing parents etc.
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12d Because of having trouble sleeping at night. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12e Because [you were/he was/she was] worried about money problems in general. Was this a reason [you/he/she] sometimes found it difficult to concentrate on studying?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12f Feeling that the [class/tutor] just wasn't right for [you/him/her]. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12g Your/His/Her health problems. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12h No private place at home to study. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate on studying?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12i Feelings of fear or anxiety about the class (or studying with the tutor). Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12j Feelings of fear or anxiety about personal problems. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12k Family members are not supportive of [your/his/her] studies. Was this a reason [you/he/she] sometimes found it difficult?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12*l* Feelings of sadness. Was this a reason [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate at times?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G12m Are there any other reasons [you/he/she] found it difficult to concentrate on studying at times?
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G13a [Were you/Was he/Was she] able to [attend the class/meet with the tutor] most of the time?
1) Yes [*go to* G19]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G13b What stopped [you/him/her] from [attending the class/meeting with the tutor] most of the time?
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

G14a Did [you/he/she] have to pay any money for the class, the tutor, or materials, labs or other expenses?
INTERVIEWER: If R expresses concern about not having been told about costs, assure him/her that participants would have been told by now if there was a cost.
1) Yes, fees for the class or tutor [*go to* G14b]
2) Yes, fees for materials, labs, other expenses [*go to* G14b]
3) Both class/tutor and materials [*go to* G14b]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

G14b Did this cause any financial difficulty for [you/him/her]?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to section* H—Demographic Information]

H—Demographic Information

H1 The learner is
INTERVIEWER: ALL the demographic questions are about the *learner/potential learner*, not necessarily about R.
1) Male
5) Female
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H2 These last questions are for classification purposes only. First, what is the highest grade in school that [you have/he has/she has] completed?
0) No schooling, never attended school [*go to* H4]
1) Zero to four
2) Five to nine
3) Ten to twelve or thirteen (but incomplete)
4) High-school diploma
5) Postsecondary (any college or university)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H3a How much of [your/his/her] early schooling (grade 1 to 12) was in Canada?
1) All [*go to* H4]
2) Some
3) Most (half or more)
4) None
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H3b In which country did [you/he/she] receive [your/his/her] early schooling?
10) [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H4 In which language can [you/he/she] express [you/him/her]self MOST easily?
1) English
2) French
3) An Aboriginal language
4) Equally well in English and other(s)
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H5a Do you feel that [you have/he has/she has] any particular barriers or personal difficulties that affect [your/his/her] ability to learn?
INTERVIEWER: If YES, probe with "Please tell me what kind of barriers or personal difficulties."
1) Yes [*specify*] [*go to* H5b]
2) Learning disability [*go to* H6, *then return to* H5b]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* H7]

H5b Any other particular barriers or personal difficulties?
INTERVIEWER: If R responded with a learning disability in the preceding open-ended question, enter option (2), learning disability, here.
0) No SECOND barrier or personal difficulty
1) Yes [*specify*] [*go to* H5c]
2) Learning disability [*go to* H6, *then return to* H5c]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* H7]

H5c Any other particular barriers or personal difficulties?
0) No THIRD barrier or personal difficulty
1) Yes [*specify*]
2) Learning disability [*go to* H6]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* H7]

H6 INTERVIEWER: Ask only if R mentioned a learning disability. [Have you/Has he/Has she] ever been tested for a learning disability?
1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H7 In general, how would you describe [your/his/her] early school experiences? Would you say they were very negative, somewhat negative, somewhat positive, or very positive?
1) Very negative
2) Somewhat negative
3) Somewhat positive
4) Very positive
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H8 In what year [were you/was he/was she] born?
INTERVIEWER: If birth year is less than 16 y ago, thank R for his/her time and end the interview.
1900–1990) Enter year
8888) Don't know
9999) Refused

H9a What is [your/his/her] main source of income right now?
INTERVIEWER: If employed, probe re full- or part-time.
1) Job—full-time
2) Job—part-time
3) Social assistance, EI, long-term disability [*go to* H9b]
4) Retirement pension
10) Other [*specify*]
88) Don't know
99) Refused

[*go to* H10]

H9b Has a social assistance or EI counsellor ever encouraged [you/him/her] to call about a program for [your/his/her] reading and writing?
1) Yes
5) No

88) Don't know
99) Refused

H10 Do you think that [your/his/her] financial situation makes it difficult for [you/him/her] to be in a program to improve [your/his/her] reading, writing or math?
INTERVIEWER: Probe: "Why is that? Could you be more specific? How so?"
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H11a Including [your/him/her]self, how many people live in [your/his/her] household?
1) One [*go to* H13]
2–8) [mark number of people in household]
9) Nine or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H11b How many are dependent?
INTERVIEWER, if asked: A dependant is anyone else in the household who relies on the learner for financial or physical support.
0) None
1–8) [mark number of dependants]
9) Nine or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H11c How many of these people are under 18 years of age?
0) None [*go to* H12a]
1–8) [mark number under 18 years of age]
9) Nine or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H11d How many of them are of pre-school age?
0) None [*go to* H12a]
1–8) [mark number of pre-schoolers] [*go to* H12b]
9) Nine or more [*go to* H12b]
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* H13]

H12a INTRVIEWER: Ask this only of people who have children.
Some programs provide childcare right at the school while people are in class or with a tutor. When [your/his/her] children were small, do you think [you/he/she] would have called for help with reading and writing sooner if childcare was provided?
1) Yes
5) No
7) No children/does not apply
88) Don't know
99) Refused
[*go to* H13]

H12b INTRVIEWER: Ask this only of learners or potential learners who have children of pre-school age.
Some programs provide childcare right at the school while people are in class or with a tutor. Do you think [you/he/she] would have called for help with reading and writing if childcare was provided?
1) Yes
5) No
7) No children/does not apply
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H13 In which of these broad categories does [your/his/her] total HOUSEHOLD income fall into?
1) Under $20,000 per year
2) $20,000 to $30,000
3) $30,000 to $40,000
4) More than $40,000
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H14 Do you know the population of the city or town where [you live/he lives/she lives]? Would it be...
1) Under 15,000 (1–14,999)
2) 15,000 to 100,000 (15,000–99,999)
3) 100,000 to 500,000 (100,000–499,999)
4) 500,000 or more
88) Don't know
99) Refused

H15 Those are all the questions I have. Is there anything you would like to add or say before we finish?
INTERVIEWER: If R expresses interest, "For further information you can phone one, eight hundred, 303-1004 or you can look in the Yellow Pages under the word LEARN for a group near you."
1) Yes [*specify*]
5) No

H16 Thank you very much for your time. The information you gave us is really important and kept confidential. Would it be OK if we called you back in another six months or a year?

1) Yes
5) No
88) Don't know
99) Refused

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